Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

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LETTER TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND	3	*Raymond Aron*
A NEW YEAR'S FABLE	6	*Vladimir Dudintsev*
CAIRO NOTEBOOK	20	*Morroe Berger*
CHAIRMAN MAO	31	*Richard Walker*
MEN & IDEAS		
WEIZMANN	44	*R. H. S. Crossman*
THEATRE		
THE SEEMING TRUTH	57	*Nigel Dennis*
LETTER FROM NEW YORK	60	*Harold Clurman*
POETRY		
TO A BROTHER IN THE MYSTERY	29	*Donald Davie*
SOLITARY TRAVEL	30	*Louis MacNeice*
"GUIDO, I' VORREI . . ."	43	*Michael Fried*
INTRUSIONS	56	*Christopher Middleton*
PAUL KRUGER'S HEIRS	64	*John Peter*
NOTES AND TOPICS		
NEW LIGHT ON BRECHT	65	*Martin Esslin*
TO AN ALDERMASTON MARCHER	67	*Anthony Hartley*
THE QUESTION OF IMPERIALISM	68	*John Strachey*
BOOKS		
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD	71	*Dan Jacobson*
IMAGINARY SOCIOLOGY	77	*Edward Shils*
AESTHETIC BLISS	81	*Frank Kermode*
FROM THE OTHER SHORE		
TROJAN HORSE, CHINESE DRAGON	87	*George Sherman*
LETTERS	90	
AUTHORS	96	

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Raymond Aron

Letter to an English Friend

You may think that this is not quite the right moment to discuss serious problems: the after-glow of the great ceremony with which the President of the French Republic was officially received; the warmth of the acclamation given to General de Gaulle, the leader of *"la France libre"*; memories of June, 1940—surely, all these instances of friendship between our two countries make for good relations and not for mutual recriminations.

Do not misunderstand me: to-day more than ever I am certain that Renan was right when he wrote in 1870: "The alliance between France and England is built to last for centuries." But I cannot forget that other remark made by the same author in the same year:

> The intellectual and moral grandeur of Europe depends upon a triple alliance, the breaking up of which should mean the end of progress; this is the alliance between France, Germany, and England.

But enough of quotations. There are other reasons why we should do some re-thinking. Between 1918–39 France and Britain had at bottom the same fundamental interests; but, they almost never had the perspicacity and the courage to see what they were. French and British diplomacy was blind and paralysed. Everything happened as if the qualities of these two countries neutralised one another instead of complementing each other. The victors of the Great War were neither capable of offering the Weimar Republic a glimpse of real reconciliation, nor of presenting a common front to a Germany which was succumbing to old evil influences. By turns aggressive and weak, the policies of the European democracies after twenty years finished up in bankruptcy.

The period after the Second World War bore no resemblance at all to the period after the first. The Soviet threat brought the countries west of the Iron Curtain closer together; economic revival, helped by international co-operation and by American aid, was much more successful than one could have hoped. The most important event of the last ten years has been *le miracle européen*. The battlefield that was Europe in 1945 is now one of the greatest centres of world industry, one of the high-spots of civilisation —and yet a quarrel has arisen between the Continent of Europe and Britain, between you and ourselves which seems to throw everything into question. Just before the arrival of General de Gaulle, your Prime Minister went to Washington to try to persuade the American administration not to support the Hallstein plan for the speeding up of the Common Market. Of course, the suggestions that your Prime Minister is supposed to have made for a "peripheral alliance," an obvious reply to Continental unity, were denied. But the speeches in the House of Commons confirmed in public the basis of the story even if they corrected the way in which it was put.

What in fact did your Prime Minister say? He said that the new friendship between France and Germany is absolutely vital for the future of peace in Europe; he admitted that the Six had the right to sign a commercial treaty, and even admitted that this

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treaty was a good thing; saying this, however, did not stop him afterwards from criticising as "fatal" the division between the Six and the other countries of Europe, and from citing previous differences, namely those which started world wars in this century. Let me say frankly that this parallel seems to me offensive and unreasonable.

I HAVE no idea whether the Common Market will become a genuine economic unity and then move on to a political federation. The *parti européen* in France hopes that this will be the result. But the princes who govern us do not quite want this. When in former years they were in opposition they fought against first the Coal and Steel community, then the E.D.C., and then the Rome Treaty. Now when they are in power, they apply the Common Market Treaty to the letter but they make a point of giving the Treaty no political significance.

Of course, you have the right not to be persuaded. In history men's acts are more important than their speeches. Perhaps the Fifth Republic (which made possible France's entry into the Common Market by restoring monetary balance in 1958) will accomplish in spite of its leaders the task which the European-minded men of the Fourth Republic wished to but hadn't the strength to achieve. Whatever happens, you do not have the right to compare the unification of the Six to the attempts at unity made by Napoleon or by Hitler, comparisons which reach us from London from time to time. Or else won't one have to say that, like the Bourbons, certain English Conservatives have neither learnt nor forgotten anything?

Please believe me when I say that I find it quite natural that you should try by diplomacy to slow down the application of the Common Market if you think that the Common Market is likely to harm your commerce. I can quite understand that, under the pretext of "narrowing the gap" between the Six and Seven, you should do your best to see that the Common Market won't really work. What annoys me is the tone of your propaganda, the violence of your attitudes. By pretending to avoid a commercial split you are creating an atmosphere of conflict in Europe. Now this "division of Europe" is not so great as you make out, and Atlantic solidarity would not be compromised if you didn't do quite your best to create the peril yourself by shouting loudly about it and by resurrecting the ghosts of ancient Caesars.

MY DEAR English friend, every time that one of your Ministers calls to mind one or other of the leaders against whom Britain defended both the liberty of us all and her own greatness, he gives a helping hand to the Continent's Europeans; he accelerates the process that he wants to slow down. By quoting absurd historical parallels that convince no one and exasperate us all, you'll end up by converting even the Dutch and German liberals to the idea of the Common Market. . . .

And so Europeans could well rejoice at your excesses of language—but if they did they would be wrong. We are all involved in the same adventure. Atlantic solidarity seems no less vital to us than European unity. We can quite well understand the unpleasant short-term consequences that the Common Market may have on some of your interests. What we ask of you is not to dramatise a quarrel that has nothing of the dramatic about it, to see it as a controversy among allies and not as a source of enmity. In short, we ask you to make your choice. Join the Common Market if you think that England cannot stay outside the Continental bloc. Discuss customs reductions and commercial agreements in a pragmatic fashion if your worries are only economic worries. And do not forget that in the last analysis the unity of the countries of Europe no more threatens the future of Britain than did, say, the nationalism of Poincaré in 1923.

Do not be half-a-century behind the times. Let the old Continent seek its future beyond the frontiers of nationalism.

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Into Europe?

BRITISH *opinion—and not least Parliamentary opinion—has until recently been extraordinarily complacent about the implications of the development of the Common Market. A minority of economists, politicians, and businessmen have been deeply concerned; but the repeated warnings they have uttered during the past two years have failed to make any deep impression. Now at last there are signs that a wider public has begun to wake up to the danger that this country may soon find itself isolated—economically and politically—from its most powerful European neighbours. Mr. Macmillan's remarks in Washington, unfortunate though they may have been in their effects on opinion in the Common Market countries, have at least helped to open the eyes of people in this country to the perils of a disunited Europe. Why else would the Prime Minister indulge in vague talk of anti-Napoleonic alliances, and run the risk of further damaging our relationship with Europe, unless he felt that vital British interests were at stake? But now that the danger has been grasped, there is also a chance that the Government's policies will come under a more critical scrutiny. No good can be done at this stage by crying over missed opportunities. It is easy now to point to the errors of past British policy; but the Government was not alone at the time in miscalculating the strength of the drive towards European integration. The question now is whether Ministers are prepared to reconsider their aims and to adapt their policy to meet realities. The alarming fact is that, in spite of what Mr. Macmillan said, there is no real sign of a change. On the contrary, the Government seems to be clinging still to the hope that the Six will eventually modify their plans to suit the British notion of a Free Trade Area.*

THE GUARDIAN

*

THE SPLIT *is not just economic, and economic means alone will not close it. Professor Hallstein's plan to hasten the birth of the Common Market is a deplorable thing to those (including* The Economist) *who hoped that at least an effort could be made to use the remaining time, before the Common Market became finally differentiated from the rest of Europe, to effect either a merger or a reconciliation. But it was not devised purely from a whim. The Hallstein plan flows from a belief that the European Economic Community is a political organism in which the economic aims, though important, are subordinate; this is a quite different kind of thing from the European Free Trade Association, a traders' mutual defence society, whose political characteristics, if any, will be incidental....*

It is not they who are dividing Europe; what they are doing is to form a European union; if any dividing is being done, it is by those Europeans who, while they will not join, object to the Six having a relationship among themselves different from their relationship with others.... Britain's tactical position is hopeless whether they are sincere or whether they are not, unless Britain can make up its mind that to have stayed outside was a mistake that ought, at the first opportunity, to be put right. Short of that, the opponents of British influence in Europe have the whip-hand.... What is needed is a period of peaceful co-existence within free Europe.

THE ECONOMIST

*

FOR *nearly a decade our productivity has been in sombre contrast with the impressive ascent in western Europe. Since 1953, British industrial production has risen by a mere 28 per cent, against 72 per cent in West Germany, and 76 per cent in France. This contrast is reflected in our declining share of world markets.... Already a growing sense of confidence in western Europe is producing a new dynamic of high investment and expansion....If the drift continues, our isolation may soon cease to be splendid and become squalid; within the foreseeable future, Britain risks degenerating into a Ruritanian backwater, thrust out of the main stream of world development....*

THE NEW STATESMAN

*

IN *practice, there seems to be no political reason why Britain should not join the Common Market as it is to-day....The real difficulties are those we have created ourselves.*

The best way to start on this would be a determined effort to co-ordinate tariffs between Britain and the Common Market, backed by some unmistakable gesture such as offering to join the European Coal and Steel Community or Euratom. It is time for Mr. Macmillan to prove that he can be as good a European as General de Gaulle.

THE OBSERVER

*

WHO *would guess, from [current] tranquil reflections on Britain and the Common Market, that we may now be at a turning point in European history? While we fuss on round our parish pump about the minutiæ of trade and tariffs, a great new united Europe is rising at our very doorstep, a new industrial giant, a mighty union of some 165 million people in which we have elected to have no part. Too proud and self-sufficient to join in this union, too weak to prevent or hinder it, too small to compete with it, too irresolute and isolated to influence it, we shall pay for our blind folly by sinking into introverted insignificance.*

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

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Vladimir Dudintsev

A New Year's Fable

I LIVE in a fantastic world, a legendary country, in a city created by my imagination. Amazing things happen to people in it, and I have had my share of such adventures. Taking advantage of this New Year season when people readily believe unlikely tales, I'll tell you some of them. I am concerned with time and the tricks it plays on us. Time, as you know, is infinite and ubiquitous. In my imaginary world you can set your watch by Moscow time, and this is why I risk telling you my story: there may be readers who will find that parts of it impinge upon their own, real, earnest lives.

A mysterious bird, an owl, has flown into our city. Several people have been honoured by its visits. The first was my immediate boss, the head of a team of scientists who are studying the sun. The second was my old school friend, now a specialist in nervous diseases; the third was myself. It's a remarkable bird. It is a pity that its habits are not studied and that there is no picture of it in the textbooks.

By the time it came I had already published several works on the properties of sunlight. I had a degree, I sat as a consultant on several commissions, and I was hurrying to become established and respectable. After the manner of our grand old men, I held my chin up and, whenever I was asked a question, took my time before delivering a weighty, carefully considered reply in a well-modulated voice. I also took good care of my expensive coat. Our rooms have cupboards and, like the older men, I kept in mine a hanger marked with my initials.

Endowed with talents, however modest, I followed the advice of an Academician and trained myself to put down such stray thoughts as came into my head. For of course, the most fruitful thoughts are not those we sweat out of ourselves, sitting at a desk for hours, but those that blow in like a gust of wind, most often as we stroll along the street. I would make a note and forget all about it. But our charwoman kept in mind the scraps of paper, as inflammable as dynamite, which filled my drawers, and took to clearing out my desk and using them to light our stoves.

Beneath the shell of my respectability I was as ingenuous as a child (so, incidentally, was our Director). At times the child with chubby cheeks would come into the open, particularly during those evening hours which several of us, unmarried men, spent in our common living-room before the television set, round-eyed and as motionless as specimens preserved in spirits, watching the legs of football-players flitting over the bluish screen.

As you see, I spare no one and myself least of all. I consciously reveal, and will continue to reveal and to submit to you for judgment, many aspects of my character which I am myself the first to judge. It is as if my eyes had recently been opened; to be exact, it happened the day the owl visited me for the first time. It was the owl that opened them and I am grateful to it.

TO TAKE one example, I could now see my quarrel with S. in a completely new light. S. is a corresponding member of a provincial Academy of Sciences. In an article he wrote five years ago, he called a well-known published

This is the first new work by Vladimir Dudintsev since his declaration of "silence" after the official Soviet critiques of his novel, NOT BY BREAD ALONE. *It was published last winter in the Moscow literary review,* NOVY MIR, *and its editor, Mr. A. Tvardovsky, has kindly given us permission to publish it in* ENCOUNTER. *A note on the author and the story by our translator, Max Hayward, will be found among "Authors" in this number.*

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work of mine "the fruit of idle speculation." I had to reply. In my own article I refuted S.'s arguments as though in passing, and got in the following words which I thought were very telling: "This is exactly what Dr. S. is trying so unsuccessfully to prove." (I knew that although he was a corresponding member he was not a full Academician but only a Doctor of Science like myself.) S. immediately produced a monograph in which, equally in passing, he accused me of forcing the results of my experiments to prove my "theory" (theory in quotation marks). Soon after this I published a long article on my most recent observations of the sun; these confirmed my theory and made mincemeat of S. "Battleship torpedoed amidships," said my colleagues. Assuming that he would be completely sunk, I had not referred to S. by name but only mentioned "certain authors." The battleship, however, survived and returned my fire....

And so on. Five years of these hostilities had shattered my nerves and not only mine.

But to come back to my story: one morning we had all gathered at the laboratory, hung our coats up on the hangers and, before getting down to work, settled to our usual morning chat. It was begun by our Director. He devoted his spare time to collecting books, stone axe-heads, coins, and generally to the study of antiquity; it seemed to me indeed that this hobby, more than our research, gave purpose to his uneventful life.

"Here's an odd thing," he said to us. "The other day I was reading an inscription on a tombstone and I came across this curious emblem."

He showed us a sheet of paper on which an owl was drawn in India ink.

"I managed to decipher the inscription too," he said with pride. "There was a name followed by the words: 'And he lived nine hundred years.' "

"Well, well," said one of us, a man of wit and fashion, with a far-away look, "I'd even settle for four hundred."

"Whatever for?" another colleague asked sharply. He was a lean, broad-shouldered, middle-aged man who sat next to me and who usually remained silent. He differed from the rest of us by his neglected clothes, his taciturnity, and his unbelievable capacity for work. "You don't need four hundred years. You're in no hurry as it is."

"May I point out," the Director raised his voice, letting it be understood that we had interrupted him. "May I point out that owls of this variety have been found at different times in widely scattered countries. There is even an enormous granite carving of an owl standing in a desert. But in our region this is the first ever to have been found. If I may say so without boasting," he beamed, "both the inscription and the owl are my own discovery. I happened to dig up the tombstone in my garden."

We all congratulated him on his luck, had another look at the owl and went to our places.

"I am determined to find out the meaning of this emblem," said the Director. "Then I might publish something."

"Could it have been a hieroglyph to denote a man who knew how to use his time?" I offered.

"Possibly. But it would still have to be proved."

"All the same, nine hundred years!" I couldn't help exclaiming. "Do you think it's possible that there were ever people who lived as long as that?"

"*Everything is possible!*" grunted my industrious neighbour without looking up.

"What do you mean by that?" the Director asked politely.

"Time is an enigma," he replied more enigmatically still.

"Yes, that's true," the Director seized on the idea with interest. Taking down an hour-glass from its bracket on the wall, he turned it over, put it on the desk in front of him and watched the sand. "See how strange! The instant we are living through is like the smallest grain of sand—less than that, a mathematical point.... It's already gone."

I felt a sudden stab of pain. I had once had several months of an amazing, unexpected love, and now these months, as I looked back on them in sorrow, merged into a single moment and became a grain of sand which had vanished through an hour-glass. Not a trace was left—as if these months had never been! I sighed. If only the glass could be turned back upside down!

The voice of our personnel officer broke in on my thoughts: "May I ask you, Chief?—according to your theory—if you can call it that—time is a mathematical point. Then what becomes of our heroic past? And what about our radiant future?"

He liked asking forthright questions in a loud voice, as though making some frightful accusation.

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"I'm sorry if I have put it badly," said the Chief who was a peace-loving man. "But I didn't think I had got round to formulating any theory. I was only joking, speculating...."

"Odd sort of speculation. There are limits, after all...."

"My dear man," grunted our dishevelled and hard-working eccentric so loudly that we all turned round. "The kind of new thing we are looking for is nearly always beyond the limit." And opening his mouth in a way he had, he laughed silently into the other's pursed-up face. Thus he revealed to us a new side of his character.

For two years we had sat in the same room, yet how little had we learnt about him! All we saw was that he rarely shaved, and that he dumped his coat on the back of his chair. We had also noticed that half the buttons on the coat were missing, and finally that he did four men's work. But not one of us had really got to know him.

"You know, I'd like to tell you of an interesting case," he spoke again, still bending over his work.

That he should waste his time talking to us amazed us: he had never yet been guilty of such extravagance. Who'd have thought that our discussion of longevity would have stirred him up so much!

"I'll just run down to the basement and set up my apparatus, not to waste time. I won't be a moment." He hurried out.

"Is he a dry old stick or isn't he?" one of us asked.

"I don't think he is," said our man-about-town. "You know I live next door to him. There is a woman who comes to see him. Can you believe it—a young woman! I bumped into her once—there she was, going up the stairs, blind to everything. Dazzled by love."

"You know he has a very rare old watch. It's extremely accurate and it only needs winding up once a year," said the Director.

"Well now, my friends." Grey, dishevelled, our new friend (we hadn't really met him until to-day) came back and sat down at his desk, holding a slide-rule. "Nine hundred years, you said.... But you know that time can stand still and can also fly. Have you ever waited for a girl you love?"

"Yes," said the boss, "time can be very slow."

"It can stand still. Do you remember reading about those scientists who found some lotus seeds in a two-thousand-year-old tomb and made them grow? For those seeds time had stood still. Time can be slowed down or given a push." He made a measurement with his slide-rule and wrote it down; he managed to work even while he talked.

"The story I'm going to tell you illustrates this point. You'll find it interesting, quite apart from its message."

He turned to me (or so I thought) as if his words were meant for me alone.

"Once upon a time in a far-away kingdom—to be more exact, a few years ago in this very town—this is what happened. One Sunday, some sixty or perhaps a hundred well-dressed men gathered in a secluded shady spot in the Park of Culture for an open-air discussion. Later on it was discovered that this two-hour session in our park had been a—what shall I call it—a symposium of thieves and bandits, members of a so-called 'Brotherhood.' Such people have their own strict rules; the punishment for breaking them is death. A new member has to have two sponsors, and when he joins, a few words are tattooed on his chest—a motto by which it can be known that he belongs."

"What is the connection between your story and our discussion about time?" the boss asked gently. "Or perhaps you haven't finished?"

"No, I haven't. It couldn't be closer. I'm coming to it.... At the congress of the bandits six sentences of death were passed. Five of them have been carried out. The sixth man is still at large owing to certain complications. But I must tell you who he is and what he had done wrong. This man was the Head, the President, or, as they say, the boss of the whole Brotherhood, the oldest and the most cunning of the bandits. He had been put in prison in some out-of-the-way place, and it must have been while he was there, sitting in solitary, that it occurred to him that he had never done anything in his life or got anything out of it, and that now he hadn't long to live. His reasoning was this: the whole point of a bandit's life is the acquisition, by the easiest possible means, of other people's property, such things as gold and other valuables. But the value and importance of riches in human society was deteriorating at a catastrophic pace."

"Quite a theoretician your bandit seems to be," the personnel officer said ironically.

"Yes, he was a man who meant business," agreed our eccentric. I liked him more and more all the time. "In recent years this criminal,

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who had done so much harm, had sobered up and taken to reading. Books, as you know, have enormous power. He had got through lots of them. He was in no hurry to be released—it suited him to read and think sitting in his stone box, and as he was their chief the bandits smuggled in whatever book he wanted, even if it was kept under lock and key inside the vaults of the State Treasury. Yes, well.... So he realised that things were losing their prestige at a catastrophic pace. Once upon a time princes and rich men used to breed moray eels in pools specially constructed inside lagoons. The eels were fed on the flesh of slaves. Such an eel served at a dinner party was regarded as the greatest of delicacies. And yet now we can't think without a shudder about these pastimes of our ancestors. There was a time when gold was a nameless metal slumbering in the earth. Later, man gave it a name and a value. Gold glittering on clothes or weapons came to be regarded as the height of elegance. Yet not one of us to-day would venture out with a gold chain stretched across his stomach or even with a gold pin in his tie. Gold is losing its prestige. And what of the prestige of precious stuffs? I can assure you that at this very moment costly fabrics are going out of fashion never to return. To show off rich possessions nowadays is a sign of spiritual backwardness."

"Well, well! So your bandit has written off all material values! And what's to take the place of things, I'd like to know?" said the personnel officer. He felt put out, for it so happened that he fancied himself in expensive tweeds with padded shoulders and his wife had once called for him at the laboratory with a splendid silver fox over her arm.

"It depends what things you mean. There are things and things. This is just what the bandit had observed, and it made him think. He realised that the adulation of material things was being ineluctably defeated by the beauty of the human soul, beauty which can be neither bought nor stolen. You can't make anyone love you by force of arms. The beauty of the soul is free and it took pride of place the moment gold and velvet gave up their positions. So now a Cinderella in a cotton print can outshine a princess draped in satin. Because what gives its value to a cheap dress is the beauty of its cut and its design, which is no longer a material value. It's the result of taste and character in those who thought of it, or chose to wear it. No wonder that nowadays many princesses who have kept their souls dress up as Cinderellas. And if we do come across a woman covered with furs and precious stuffs, instead of being dazzled by her display of wealth, we shy away as from a spiritual cripple who is parading her deformity.

"This is what my bandit had observed, and suddenly he realised that never in all his life had he possessed such 'things' as the approval of his fellow men, or friendship, or true love—all his life he had spent chasing after things which had no value. Something like a currency reform took place in him. Yes...." The speaker cleared his throat. "And yet people whose love and friendship he so much needed did exist. He knew of them.... There was a woman.... But he couldn't even face her. He couldn't come into the open, it was too risky.

"Eventually he put down all his ideas in a long letter to the Brotherhood, saying that he was resigning his 'office' and joining the society of normal people who work for their living, and adding that he intended to achieve by some outstanding action what he had never yet experienced in life but now longed for with all his being. The prison administration had his letter printed as a leaflet. You realise, of course, that it was a document of great power; it was important to make use of it.

"Now look at the situation in which the 'boss' found himself. In the course of his life he had been sentenced by various courts to prison terms amounting to some two hundred years. He knew that the State would not remit his punishment. On the other hand, knowing the rules and customs of the Brotherhood better than anyone, he realised that they would not forgive him for his betrayal and that somewhere a knife was being sharpened for him. But he needed at least a few more years of life in order to carry out his plan. So before the Brotherhood had passed sentence, he made his last jail break. He had plenty of money and he found clever doctors who worked a transformation on him just like a fairy tale. They grafted new skin on his face and hands and changed his hair. They even changed his voice. They were first-class experts.

"He got hold of new immaculate identity papers and became a new man. In three years he graduated from two universities and, at the moment, he is completing his work which is enormous in conception. He wants to make a gift to his fellow men...."

"That's all very well," I interrupted him because he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon me.

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"But what has any of this to do with our discussion—with time standing still or flying, or the inscription: 'He lived nine hundred years'?"

"It has everything to do with it. Here is a man hunted by his executioners. They dog his footsteps and they will inevitably catch up with him. He has very little time left. *Time*—you see what I mean? And this man is determined to live the whole of his life over again within the span of a couple of years. But suppose he had lived all his life as he is living now? He might well have lived nine hundred years and more."

"You are speaking, of course, about the content of his life and not its length?" said the Chief.

"It's obvious *you* don't economise your time!" my neighbour lost his temper. "Yes, yes, yes! Content! What we fill the vessel of time with. It should be filled only with the greatest joys, the most powerful sensations of delight we can experience...."

"Now you've let your hair down," said the personnel officer. "So you are preaching pure selfishness! All you want is joys, delights! And what about the little matter of working for the people? What d'you think of that? Eh?"

"WHAT I think is that you're behind the *times. You should be taken in tow.* You imagine that joy is a sin—a sin you secretly indulge in within the privacy of your four walls —and that working for the people is just your public duty. Compared with you my bandit is a man of advanced views. He has tested all your joys and he is sick and tired of them. There's only one joy he believes in now, and that's what you regard as a grim duty."

"Tell me," said the Director after a moment's silence, "How do you know all these details? Here's a man who has changed his face, his name... and he's surely not a fool—I can't see him confiding in strangers."

"I'm not a stranger to him."

"You should give him up to the authorities if you know your duty as a citizen," the personnel officer said abruptly. "You should report him—a man who has committed so many crimes and has escaped from prison...."

"Not on your life," said our colleague. "Not on your life. He is not a bandit now. He's harmless, he's even useful. When he's done his job he'll give himself up."

He reached into his pocket for his famous watch—a heavy round old-fashioned watch on a steel chain.

"Sorry. I've got to go and check my instruments."

He stopped on his way out.

"You ought to think about my story. You particularly," he looked me straight in the eyes. "You might consider the experience of others and stop playing with trifles. I'm thinking about your squabble with that Corresponding Member...."

How could I suppose then that I was to be drawn into his story, play the hero's part in it, become the hero's double?

ABOUT half-an-hour later I followed him into the basement: I wanted to check on a suspicion which had suddenly arisen in my mind. There he sat surrounded by the gleam of glass and copper. The door scarcely creaked, but he ducked so suddenly that he knocked over several test-tubes.

"Sorry," I said.

"Checking up on your hunch?" He was regaining his composure.

"You're a bit reckless."

"I'm not afraid of you." He turned back to his instruments.

Now that I was sure, I understood the meaning of several other things which I have not so far mentioned.

It had recently become obvious that someone was taking an unaccountable interest in my person. I was being shadowed. Not once did I get a good look at whoever it was who dogged my steps, although in fact he never hurried out of sight. He (or she) would take up his position in some dark doorway, but would now and then venture boldly out into the sunlight, slipping back only when I reached into my pocket for my spectacles. Several times I went up to the gate or doorway through which my follower, who seemed to be so drawn to me, had vanished, only to find it empty. A few days ago there came the first fall of cleanest, softest snow. Late that evening I was walking along a deserted street when I heard footsteps at my back and guessed, before I even turned my head, that this was he (or she). When I did turn round I caught a glimpse of something that might have been a cloak or a tail-coat vanishing down a side-street. I raced after it like a madman, but when I reached the corner, all I saw was the white, peaceful alleyway and not a soul in sight. I

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looked down at the snow but there were no footprints. It is true that afterwards I remembered several cross-shaped tracks, rather like those of an enormous hen, melting into the soft porous snow.

Now, as I stood talking to my colleague in the basement, I told him all about it. He shook my hand and said: "Thank you. I've noticed a few things myself. Now go. I have to hurry. As you see, I'm very short of time. Incidentally, it wouldn't be a bad idea if you pressed on a little too. You never know what might happen."

WE WERE both working on the same problem, but we approached it from different angles. One of us was wrong, the other right. But the problem was so important that even a mistake was worth it if it would clear the way for other scientists. We were looking for a method of condensing sunlight. The end result we hoped for would produce months or even years of brilliant light and warmth for a distant continent which never saw the sun. One side of our planet had no sunshine—it lived in perpetual winter and eternal night. The fact that this, the most important of our problems, was the one my colleague had seized upon was to my mind a further proof of his identity: here in front of me was the bandit chief in a hurry to live. Would a year, or even two, suffice him for his task?

I judge things soberly and count my costs. If I was marking time year in, year out, wondering which side of the problem to tackle first, it was because to start on my research meant putting other things aside and burying myself in my job for a good ten years. If only the whole team could have been pulled in on the project! But it was something to be allowed to work on it at all. Many people were against it; nearly all the members of the Academic Council thought of us as crackpots. Anyway, there it was—ten years.... What could be achieved in two?

As it turned out, he had not two years to live, but only a few more hours. Next morning I was rung up from the hospital. My remarkable bandit had been found in the night, bleeding to death on our doorstep. (We lived in the same house.) He had several deep knife-wounds in the back. The whole Institute was in an uproar. Several well-known specialists were called in but it was too late. By mid-day the activists of the Institute were ringing up the undertakers.

HIS death and the fact that he had seemingly foretold it was a profound shock to us. For several days we exchanged meaningful glances whenever we met. My nerves went to pieces. I panicked and lost weight. I couldn't bear to listen to any talk unless it was related to the job, and I worked intensively for a week. After that I received the new number of our periodical, saw that S. was one of the contributors, and got so excited that everything except that printed page went clean out of my head. I leafed nervously through the journal and caught sight of a footnote. (The worst insults are always set in small print.) There, among polite but deadly words, I found my name. I did another somersault and settled back into my old groove. Paper, paper! Who was it who invented you? I gave up work and, urged by my supporters, wrote an article with not just one but three footnotes intended finally to make an end of S.; the whole team took part in drafting them. And if you want a picture of us concentrating on this work, I suggest that you should go to the Tretyakov Gallery and look at Repin's *Zaporozhian Cossacks*. There we all are, including the Director, splitting his sides with laughter, and myself sitting at the desk, bespectacled and pen in hand.

Once I was on my old, familiar track, I quite forgot the watcher who had been peering at me round corners and from doors and gateways. Since the distressing days which ended in the funeral, I had seen no sign of the tail-coat, and I concluded that it must have been one of the bandits keeping an eye on me while tracking down the man who was now dead.

But soon after I had received a copy of the periodical with my reply in it—or rather, just as I was leaving the office of the editor who had commissioned me to write another article, I had a sensation all over my back that I was being watched. I turned round, but could see no one. Then I raised my eyes to the first floor of a half-ruined house on which the demolition men were working, and there, in a hole gaping in the walls, a dark figure side-stepped and took cover.

It so happened that it was my thirtieth birthday and I had meant to ask some friends to celebrate the end of my third decade. You can imagine what I felt like when now, by daylight, long before the evening, this advance shadow fell across my party.

I went home and up the stairs. My colleague, the man-about-town, was waiting for me in the

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common-room where we spent the evenings looking at the television programme.

"Well, shall we have our celebration?"

"I'm not feeling well," I said. "We'll have to put it off."

"Whoever heard of being down in the dumps on a day like this! Thirty is the best age in a man's life!" He presented me with a colourful tie and whispered: "Come on. I'll drink you under the table. I've got hold of an extraordinary wine."

While we were talking I noticed a woman whom I didn't know, sitting at the far end of the room. I had a curious feeling that she must have been waiting for me for a long time. Now she got up and took a step towards me, and I no longer heard a word of what my friend was saying. She was about thirty, she had sloping shoulders, and she was very beautiful. Her beauty lay in the small endearing irregularities of her face and figure and above all in her sad and open look. When she spoke the same beauty echoed in her low-pitched, gentle voice.

I thought at once of that other golden grain of sand which had once, long, long ago slipped through the hour-glass; it lay forgotten, non-existent, while this new moment advanced upon me.

"I was asked to hand this over to you for your birthday," she said with a detached politeness, putting the heavy watch on its steel chain into my hand. "And also this." She took an envelope out of her bag.

"From him?"

"Yes."

I wondered if I could ask her if the man who was now dead had known true love, such as can be neither bought nor stolen—had there been this between them? But before I could say anything, she read the question in my face and put up her hand to stop me.

"Yes, there was, there was," she whispered. "And is. And will be. But he was never sure.... I played a game with him. Do you understand? And when they let me speak to him at the hospital, I went on shouting for an hour, 'Yes, yes, yes!' But he couldn't hear."

I bowed my head. My poor friend! I, of all people, understood.

I put the watch into my pocket, saw my visitor to the front door, and came back.

"She's the one," the man-about-town said softly. "The one who used to come and see the bandit. But she didn't recognise me. She never saw anything. If you stood in her way, she'd come straight on as if she thought she could walk through you. Blind with love." He laughed. "But she's seen you. You'd better look out."

I went into my room and slit the envelope.

"You will receive this letter if I am killed," wrote my dead colleague. "You have great gifts. I am writing to you because you know more about me than the others, and you may come to have a better sense of time. Life is given to us only once and we must gulp it down in great draughts, without stopping for breath. We must seize on whatever is most precious. I have already spoken of what that is. Not gold or finery. I hope that you will live to experience great happiness. Remember the dark continent where millions of people live. May the day you get this letter be the day of your real birth...."

Struck by a happy thought as though by lightning, I stopped reading. "I am luckier than he is," I thought. "I still have half my life ahead of me, perhaps even two-thirds. I needn't hurry. There's time for everything."

At this moment, something dark and solid blocked my window. I thought that workmen must be painting the house and had pulled their ladder up to the third floor. Turning the page, I went up to the window, closer to the light. "But," it suddenly occurred to me, "what would painters be doing outside at this time of year?" I looked up and started violently. Sitting on the iron ledge outside the window was an enormous owl with fuzzy ears and long grey side-whiskers; oddest of all, it looked out of shape, almost like a primitive sculpture. It was my owl. For the first time I saw it in the flesh. I waved the letter at it and said *Shoo*, but this had not the slightest effect.

A deeply wounding explanation struck me with such pain and terror that I broke into a sweat. Phew! I drew a shuddering breath and wiped my forehead. The owl was sitting motionless in its place, bolt upright, like any other owl. I took another breath, wiped my forehead once again and tiptoed out. Without remembering how I got there, I found myself outside, in the bitter cold. Where was I to go? Ah yes, to the clinic, to see my old school friend, the nerve specialist. He had a lively and creative mind. He would be interested in my case and take me in hand.

I strode hastily down the avenue filled with lilac evening shadows, and at once heard the sound of something hopping after me. I looked

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back. A furry ear and one wing stuck out from behind the nearest tree. The owl was as big as I was!

THE doctor was busy. For a long time I sat in front of the white door of his consulting-room; beyond it I could hear the sound of steady pacing. Finally the door flew open and my friend came out, dressed in his white overall, his white cap pulled down over his eyebrows, and looking drawn and pale with overwork and lack of sleep.

"Well? How's it going?" someone shouted from another room.

"Still the same," he shouted back, his face contracting in a nervous spasm. "Still no good."

I got up. The doctor gradually came to; he saw me, recognised me, and held out his hand.

"If this is a social call, you've come at a bad time."

"It's not a social call."

"Well, come over here." He took my hand and looked at my fingertips. "How old are you?"

"Thirty."

"I forgot we were the same age. Well, what are you worried about? Is someone after you?"

"If you only knew who.... The strangest character.... You'll laugh at me...."

"I know. Want me to show you? Come in."

He took me to his room and led me to the window.

"My owl!" I whispered.

It was sitting outside.

"Not only yours," said the doctor. "Mine too. Let me have another look at your hands. Yes...."

He walked over to his desk and stood a moment with his back to me. Finally he turned round.

"Sooner or later you'll find out. I might as well tell you now: you've got a year left to live."

The floor sank under my feet and I would have fallen if he hadn't caught me and helped me to a chair.

I know that there are people who are not afraid of death: they have nothing to lose. I confess that I shook with terror. Once my task was finished I was ready to die—but not now!

"I don't believe it!" I whispered.

"You'd better get up and run home," said the doctor, raising an eyebrow. His manner was very tense. "You've got a whole year ahead of you."

"I don't believe it!"

"Get out!" he shouted at me suddenly. "You're stealing my time. I'm ill myself. I've got eighteen months."

He did, all the same, stop me on my way out and muttered, almost gabbling: "It's a well-known disease, and it's usually people with creative gifts who get it in an acute form. Flabby characters get it mildly and die without noticing."

"And you haven't discovered anything?..."

"We've found out a lot, but we still haven't got a cure. All the same we know a thing or two." He added these incomprehensible words: "Anyone who sees the owl clearly is already half saved."

He banged the door.

"Do I see it clearly?" I thought. I must look.

I stood listening to the silence and at this moment I heard the bandit's heavy steel-cased watch ticking inside my pocket. It was doing its job, counting out the seconds. I took it out, fitted the ornate key and wound the spring. It took twenty turns. There—it was wound up for a year.

"I must hurry," I told myself. "I must think of everything." For the first time in my life I was really hurrying, that is to say hurrying coldly and collectedly.

THE clear, frosty evening welcomed me with its cheerful lights, its purring traffic, the distant glitter of its stars.

I decided to look at the stars and think. At once it seemed as if the star-filled sky bent over me, drew closer for me to see the grandeur of its infinity.

"Well, all right. The flesh will die. Let it. But the mind, the mind! Will that vanish too?" I closed my eyes.

"I shall not vanish," said my mind in the darkness. Unlike my feelings, it was calm. "Think," said my mind. "The world of civilised men is several thousand years old. Yet how long do man-made things last? Clothes, furniture, machines, all fall to pieces within a few decades. How then did we accumulate all these things we see around us? Quite simply: we accumulated ideas—the secrets of metal-working, of medicine, of setting bricks with mortar.... Burn the books, destroy the secrets of the craftsmen, let years pass by till they are utterly forgotten, and mankind will rediscover the stone axe and start again on the same road. Your son—not even your grandson, but your son—will dig up the

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cog-wheel you made when you were young and bow before it as if it were a miracle."

A loud, clear waltz-tune poured from an invisible loudspeaker and flowed over the town. The composer was unknown to me and I did not really listen. I heard no band, no trombones, and no violins—these were the voices of my feelings. And when the melody was taken up by the woodwind I clearly understood that these were my desires locked up and singing in their narrow box, the tight confinement of my short existence.

"You want to live," said the unknown composer. "See what they do to you, the few notes I left behind in the world of men a hundred years ago after my brief and arduous stay among them. In those who are allotted a short life, the love of life burns with a stronger, brighter flame. It is better to desire and not possess than to possess and not desire. I loved life and I pass my love of it on to you."

He lowered his voice.

"Listen to me now. My own life, short as it was, overflowed with joy. But what about you? Did anyone ever shake your hand in gratitude—shake it so hard as to jolt your heart out of its place? Has anyone ever looked at you and cried with love?"

I felt stunned. Nothing of the sort had ever happened to me yet. It was true that I had loved, but no one had ever looked at me in such a way. I had experienced no great friendship, I had earned no gratitude.... I bowed my head and ceased to listen to the music while the city lights grew dim around me. All I could hear now was a cheerful ticking: my watch, the bandit's gift to me, was busily ticking away my life, my seconds: "You have all your life ahead of you, a whole year! You've only just been born. You're younger than you were before. Hurry, run to where your work is waiting for you. Friendship, love—everything you want is there."

I SET off at a run, leapt into a taxi—faster, faster, to the laboratory! The driver looked round in astonishment as he changed into top gear.

Leaving the taxi waiting, I ran up the stairs. On the landing, beside the red-hot stove, the old charwoman sat nodding in her chair. I shook her awake.

"Quick, quick, give me back my papers. Those you took from me this morning—I gave you a whole basketful."

"Oh dear, fancy you remembering!"

I gave a groan and poked about among the glowing ashes.

"I burned the lot. It made a nice fire. Your papers are the only ones that burn so well. I even fell asleep, it got so warm."

"Tick-tock-tick-tock," said the bandit's watch inside my pocket. Gritting my teeth, I went into my work-room, took down case after case of instruments and loaded them into the taxi. I had decided to set up a laboratory at home and work at night. To think that I could earn the boundless gratitude of my fellow men and that I hadn't even made a start!

When I came into the common-room, a case of instruments under each arm, a few regulars were already sitting before the television set.

"So that's that, we postpone the celebration," said the man-about-town.

He twiddled the knobs and the legs of football players flitted across the screen. The viewers stiffened in their chairs, their eyes fixed and as large as saucers. I heard the ticking of my watch and the realisation came to me that if the television programme were to continue uninterruptedly for two thousand years, these five men would stay exactly as they were now and be preserved for posterity like the lotus seeds.

I shifted several chairs, together with their occupants, out of my way, carried all my instruments into my room and paid off the taxi.

THE owl was on its ledge outside the window. I could now look at it calmly. It was well lit by the strong bulb inside the room. Was I seeing it clearly? I went close up to it and for a few moments we gazed at one another through the glass. Then the owl walked the length of the iron ledge and back (just as an owl does on a tree-branch at the zoo). It bent forward, raised its enormous three-toed foot, yellow as though dipped in wax, and swiftly, like a hen, scratched its beak with its back claw. Then once more it settled down, bolt upright, and fixed me with its two tin-button eyes. I could see the owl distinctly!

I came to myself and hurried to unpack my instruments and set them up. Within five minutes my room was a laboratory glittering with glass and nickel.

"But what can I get done?" I thought. "I need at least ten years." I made an effort to remember some, at least, of the ideas which at various times had served to light our stoves.

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I tried to write them down, but nothing came of it.

"They would have cut down my work by half!" I banged the table with my fist.

Then I saw the bandit's letter, lying on the floor where I had flung it down earlier in the day. The few lines I had left unread were staring at me.

"I can help you. Did you understand the story about the bandit? If so, ask the woman who brings you this letter to give you the notebook in which I secretly put down all your ideas—those you have been throwing into the stove for the past two years. I meant to use them, as apparently you didn't want them."

"Where can I find her now?" I shouted, still not reading to the end of the letter. Then I saw the words: "Her telephone number is...."

Within seconds—as in a fairy tale—I was back in the common-room where the television viewers sat breathing steadily, sound asleep with their eyes open. I propped the telephone on the shoulder of one of them and dialled the number. It rang several times before I heard her voice.

That moment of my new brief life opened a new chapter. It began with a misunderstanding which arose through my own fault.

"Why didn't you pick up the receiver at once?" The words came rushing out before I had time to think how rude they were. "Where's the notebook? Why didn't you give it to me?"

"You didn't ask me. You didn't even read the letter. It said that if..."

I flew off the handle again: "It's obvious that time means nothing to you!...I'm sorry."

The telephone was silent.

"Why don't you say something?" I shrieked again. "The notebook, the notebook!"

"I'm on my way," replied her warm low voice.

WHEN I heard her footsteps I realised that it wasn't only the notebook I was waiting for. From the very moment I had first seen her I was drawn to her as inexorably and unconsciously as a piece of driftwood to a distant waterfall. Could it be that another golden grain of sand was on the point of slipping through the hour-glass? "Well, let it," I thought. "None of this exists for me any longer....Lovely women want to be courted stubbornly and for a long time. And they are right. And no one has more right to it than you who have not forgotten shouting yes, yes, yes, to a dying man. And are you likely to forget him? Is my commonplace image likely to drive out of your memory that improbable, exotic man with his borrowed face? No, so far as love goes I am dead, I don't exist."

At this point the door opened and she walked in—small, with her sloping shoulders and her tranquil beauty. "I love you," shouted every living fibre of my being. I realised that the childhood of my new life was over, I had reached adolescence. But a dry tap on the window cooled my ardour. I didn't even have to look to know what it was.

With hardly a greeting, I snatched the notebook from her hand, turned my back on her and opened it. It was full of drawings, sketches, calculations—those I had been scattering and burning all these past few years. I turned the pages. Wonderful! Now it would need eight years, not ten, to do the job. By working at home as well as at the Institute I could save another two. I would follow several lines of research at once. I would work day and night.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" asked the woman, as I hastily connected wires and switched plugs.

"I have very little time...." I broke off. "Life is short and there's a lot to do. I'm getting on with it."

I set my apparatus going; cheerful lights shone in the retorts, transparent fluids bubbled in glass tubes and rare earths melted in the crucibles.

The owl slept on its ledge, its head tucked under a wing. I decided to resolve one lingering doubt.

"What's that outside the window?" I asked the woman, pointing to the owl. At these words the huge bird raised its head, stared out of the yellow lenses of its eyes, and blinked rapidly several times. The woman went up to the window, put her face against it, and held her hands on either side to shut out the light.

"There's no one there," she smiled, and broke off. Looking at me intently she bit her lip as though struck by some discovery. "There's no one," she said again. "Did you see anyone? Are you being followed?"

"There can't be anyone if you say there isn't," I evaded.

But now she questioned me in her turn, and it was I who was surprised and baffled.

"Why have you changed your room?" she asked.

I looked at her, startled, but said nothing: I was already spellbound by my new discipline. I turned the handle of my old-fashioned adding machine and made a calculation. The woman was still watching me.

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Neither of us spoke for about an hour. At last she couldn't bear it any longer and laughed softly.

"You might at least tell me what all the hurry is about."

"What it's about? He—you know who I mean—he must have told you."

"Yes, he told me."

"Well, that's why I'm in a hurry too. I've lived a whole life and I haven't done a thing. And yet there's something I could do for people. I'll never feel I've got a foothold on the earth until someone shakes my hand in gratitude—shakes it so hard as to jolt my heart out of its place. Now I'm working for him. The day he comes, I'll be happy."

She must have liked what I said. She remained silent for a while, then she began again:

"Why do you waste time? It's so unlike you. You know you've got a brand new calculating machine with all the latest improvements."

That was news! What could she be talking about? Once again I made no reply. She took my hand and led me to the door.

"What is it now?" I stopped.

"Don't waste time," she said, mimicking my tone. "Don't worry. I'll help you to save time."

She took me to a room on another floor—the one my unusual friend, the bandit, had occupied until a month before—unlocked it, switched on the light and turned away from me, hiding a smile. As for me, I frankly glowed with pleasure: the room was full of the most recent and expensive instruments—exactly those I needed. I looked them over and moved them round and forgot all about her.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" I suddenly heard her voice. "Why do you pretend you've never seen them?"

There it was again!

"What do you mean?" I asked her sharply.

"Well, you must have been to see your friend now and again," she replied evasively. "Perhaps you've never seen this either?"

There was an unfamiliar plant with a large flower growing in a glass tank on the window-sill. She showed it to me as if setting me a test. All at once I remembered.

"It's a lotus. Grown from a seed which lay in a tomb for two...."

"Right!" she said triumphantly. "You get full marks. And what about this?"

She handed me a calculating machine of the latest model, the kind I hadn't even dared to dream about. It could do the work of a whole roomful of assistants working with the old machines.

"May I take this?" It was beyond me not to ask.

"You're wasting time!" she raised her voice in imitation of my tone or perhaps the bandit's. "Yes, yes, yes! It's all yours. All the instruments. And even the lotus!"

I had the feeling that something had annoyed her.

"Oh well, of course," she said after a while as though thinking aloud. "You change your face, your voice, then you have to change your room, so that nobody should know or tell.... You even change your friends...."

If only I had listened at the time! But as I have already said, I was completely dominated by the new set of rules which had given a new direction to all my thoughts. I paid no attention to her chatter.

In a single night I made a great leap forward. I was sure now that my early assumptions had been correct. If I could go on at this rate I would get my first result within eight months, and then I could get the whole Department to co-operate. The sceptics would be silenced.

Next morning, oblivious of all around me and full of the most joyful hopes, I walked to the laboratory. A blast of talk and laughter met me as I came in. It appeared that my perennial opponent, S., had already printed his reply!

"There's efficiency for you!" the Director exclaimed ironically and, in the circle of my supporters, gusts of menacingly-cheerful noise rose and fell at his every word.

They all stood round my desk, the Director splitting his sides with laughter; the only figure missing from the picture was the scribe, a pen behind the ear, that is to say myself.

"Well, brave warrior, it's up to you now," said the Director, putting the cutting on my desk.

I astounded them by not even bothering to read S., who now struck me as merely a naïve and harmless eccentric. The thought of him no longer stirred me: something else had fired my blood. I brushed him off like a mosquito. I may as well say now that S. continued for a long time to write articles for my especial benefit. In one footnote he said that I had taken refuge in shame-faced silence, in others that I had taken a vow of silence, that I had evaded the issue, that I was hiding my head in the sand like an

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ostrich. He flapped his wings and crowed like a cockerel, hoping that his challenge would be taken up and the fight continued.

Seeing me push the cutting to one side, my colleagues exchanged glances.

"Are you feeling all right?" asked the man-about-town. "Just look at that, boys. I don't believe he's shaved! And he's dumped his coat on his chair! And two buttons on his coat are missing! Well, well, what d'you make of that? I believe he's a changeling! He's a bit like what's-his-name... the man who used to sit next to him."

He looked significantly at the bandit's empty desk.

It was true that my character had changed sharply. I was a different man. I had stopped playing the great scientist, I no longer spoke in a well-modulated voice, I no longer fussed and cooed over trivial questions. I rushed on in a sort of feverish daze. I had an avid hunger for life, and the oddest thing was that my idea of pleasure had completely changed.

What was it that now gave me joy? I gazed ceaselessly at *her*. She had settled in my room, moved in her camp-bed, and assisted me in my experiments day and night. I have no idea when she managed to sleep. I delighted in looking at her as she sat at her table, in watching the angle of her head as she bent over her work like a mother bending to her child.

And looking at the line of head, neck, and sloping shoulder, at this gentle, softly curving arc by which alone I would always have known her, I longed for her to turn and glance at me. Guessing my silent plea, she turned and looked, her chin on her shoulder. But each time some still unanswered question stirred in her, and after watching me intently for a moment, she would go back to her work.

She decided to set me one more test. We had made it a rule that whenever we had an hour or two of leisure, we would visit a gallery or go to hear a concert or an opera. One evening, after setting up the apparatus and switching on the current, she took me by the arm and said:

"We have a whole hour with nothing to do. Will you make me a present of it?"

I thought it over.

"Very well."

We went out. She led me down a street and turned into a dark, tree-lined avenue.

Suddenly she turned and said, addressing me not as "you" but, familiarly, as "thou":

"You *must* remember this path."

I'd had quite enough of it all, and I was annoyed. I said: "It's right that we should call each other 'thou,' it's high time. But I must ask you to stop playing this guessing game. You've been doing it for two months and I'm completely in the dark. It wastes our time."

"Why are you always in such a hurry?"

Just then, in shadow beyond the pool of light thrown by a street lamp, I saw the dark shape of my owl; its eyes gleamed and blinked. I stopped. I meant to point them out to my companion, then I remembered that she would see nothing.

"Why am I in a hurry?" I made up my mind to tell her. "Because I've got less than a year to live." My words moved her. It was as if they were all she needed for an outburst. She turned, facing me, and cupped my chin in her hands. Her eyes, so close to mine, were full of tears.

"If you're sure of that, why must we have secrets from each other?" she whispered.

Before I could open my mouth, she put her finger on my lips.

"It's *you*, my dear, I know it's you."

At last I understood.

"You think that I am... he?"

"Don't torture me any more. Remember last time, how you tried to hide from me. Why are you punishing me?"

"But I'm somebody quite different," I shouted. "Look, my hair is different, my face is different. I haven't changed them. I have no scars, no stitches."

"There were no scars or stitches then either, but I guessed all the same. I knew at once. Tell me, when I came and brought you the letter and the watch, why did you change colour and ask me if we had loved each other? You were very anxious to know. I saw through your trick at once—it was too simple." She laughed. "I was so happy you asked."

"I'll soon be really parting from you," I said.

"We'll never part. Even if you run away from me again, even if you change your height as well as your face, even then I'll find you."

"I have less than a year to live. That's certain."

"I don't believe it. You've been saying it for years."

"It was he who said it," I reminded her, "and he was killed."

"He wasn't. You are so clever, you thought of everything. You arranged for all your things to be handed over to your double—to yourself. Oh, you're cunning! They'll never get you...."

"Oh, God! What nonsense!"

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I suppose the other used to cut her short in the same way. It made her laugh.

"I won't talk about it again. You didn't like it then either. I really won't. I like you even better now. You're gentler, and you have a wonderful smile! You speak so well about the man who is to come.... I've wasted so much time! Why did I tease you, as if I were a girl in my teens! Shall I shout again that word you so much wanted me to say? Yes! Yes! D'you hear now? Tell me you can hear me. Shout it."

"I hear you," I whispered. I could no longer struggle against the current. The driftwood rushed swiftly towards the waterfall. "Whom do you love most?" I asked. "The one who died, or the one who is here now?"

"The one who is here."

I was loved. I could see her eyes. I had only to turn my head a little to the right and I could see them shining with tears.

And so I took the place of the bandit who had left us. I was no longer an adolescent, I had grown up.

THE doctor's forecast had been correct. One bright summer day five or six months after I had seen him, I knew for certain that I was ill; I could hardly keep on my feet.

Guiltily I looked at my quiet, distraught love. "You know, darling, I think I'll lie down. You take charge while I'm in bed. Will you turn on the wireless?"

She turned it on and immediately we heard—now loud and booming, now fading in the crackle of magnetic storms—the voice of the dark continent. Over there they were hard at work, mining coal and growing cabbages by artificial light.

"We'll have to work still harder," I said. "We've got to hurry."

The boiling liquids in the test-tubes ran still faster, the lights glowed brighter.

September was rainy. We finished one experiment. I lay in bed, so weak that I couldn't raise my head.

"Open the first of the lead containers," I said.

She took off the seal.

"It's no good," I heard her say softly. "All there is inside is a little glowing cinder."

"No, it's not a dud," I said calmly, "it's only a variant. Everything is taken care of in the other two experiments. The cinder will do for a demonstration.... Get hold of the others.... Get the Director...."

They tiptoed in as people do on entering a sick-room. I had never let them in before, and now, as they saw the room arranged as a laboratory, they stopped and looked round. They didn't know what to make of it; everything surprised them—the calculations scribbled on the walls, the scratched furniture (I made notes on it with a nail), as well as the glitter of the instruments which gave off a faint warmth.

Then they saw me. My appearance must have shocked them for they became even more subdued. Only the man-about-town, who could not take his eyes off my companion, whispered something to the chief.

"Tell them," I said to her.

She spoke about our work for ten minutes, like a trained scientist, and showed them the cinder which gave no signs of going out.

The cinder impressed them all, particularly the Director. He was the first to come and shake me solemnly by the hand. After that they all rushed forward noisily, grabbing my weak hands and shaking them—and I felt as if at any moment they would jolt my heart out of its place.

"From this day on we all work together," said the chief. "I'm putting the whole team on to it."

Two of them remained on duty in my room day and night, while the laboratory reported daily by telephone. Thus we made swift progress.

On a cold December day my companion removed the second of the lead seals in the presence of the Director.

"Another dud," she told him in a low voice. "It's even worse this time. The cinder is quite black."

I overheard them.

"I've made allowance for this failure as well," I said, scarcely able to move my lips. "Get on with the work. Hurry!"

My hearing had become very sharp. I heard the Director whispering, his hand before his mouth: "A third failure will kill him." He added aloud: "Hmm.... Think I'll take this lot over to the laboratory. We'll carry on the third experiments there—we have better facilities."

"Go ahead," I said.

AND so my wife and I were left alone in the quiet, empty room—we two and the owl. A few days earlier, when the window was half open, the owl had managed to squeeze into the room; it now slept on the window-sill or walked about under the desk, pecking at the floor. My wife—to be called my wife she had every right

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—sat beside me, and we talked softly, remembering our brief youth.

Three or four days later I felt worse; I asked her to throw the window open.

"Darling, it's bitterly cold. Must I?"

"Open it, open it," I whispered.

She went up to the window.

"What *is* this? Spring in December! Can you hear? It's thawing and there's a fly buzzing on the window pane!"

"Open it. . . ."

She pushed the window open, then flung it wide—and together with the warm spring breeze an astonishingly pleasant, distant music filled the room. It flowed over the town, now dying away, now rising in great surging waves. I listened, not knowing that it was the vibration of the wires carrying the news to all the world—news of man's victory over cold and darkness. From time to time this music was joined by the solemn drone of aeroplanes: they flew over the town bearing their precious freight of Spring to the dark continent, which had never seen it. None of this I knew, and I felt very ill and at the end of my strength. I lay listening for the sound of footsteps, waiting for my friends to bring me the good news. I was also frightened by the odd behaviour of the owl: it walked about excitedly round my bed, shaking out its feathers and occasionally fluttering its wings. There is nothing more depressing than to take leave of life before the completion of a useful job you have in hand and which depends on you.

Little by little I dropped off to sleep. Voices echoed in the stair-well, doors banged, footsteps hurried, but I heard none of this. The first thing I heard was the voice of my old school friend, the doctor:

"He's still alive."

As he sat down by my bedside, his shaking fingers were unscrewing a lead capsule.

"Quick, quick, tell me!" I tried to shout.

And shout I did because my illness had left me.

A dazzling drop of light trembled in the doctor's hands, flooding the room with sun. I had known about it a long time, I had often dreamed about it; at the very outset of my experiments I could see it every time I closed my eyes. Now this small bright sun was too strong for my eyes. I got up, swaying weakly. My wife ran to help me, but I waved her back and walked across the room on my own. I even stamped my foot! She leaned back against the wall, radiant and incredulous.

"Thank you, doctor," she whispered.

"For what? It was he who conquered his own death, he who found the cure. This light is his."

Once again the staircase echoed and doors banged. The whole crowd burst into my room —friends, colleagues, strangers. They surrounded me, they shook my hand. The chief pushed his way through.

"You really did get your measure of time, pressed down and running over," he congratulated me. "In ancient times your emblem would have been an owl. Do you remember—you once suggested it was a hieroglyph."

"Do you know, I believe it's true—there's some supporting evidence," I said. "It's true," I thought. "I've lived a whole lifetime in a year." And how many more such years had I ahead? A great ocean of time!

WHOM was I to thank? I looked at the window-sill, but the owl had gone. Only the lotus blossomed in its glass tank. And outside, far, far away in the pale blue sky, some large bird winged its way heavily to the horizon.

The sea of time lapped at my feet. I stood on its shore, ready to start life again from the beginning and, wave after wave, the mysterious future surged towards me and drew me on. "Tomorrow I'll be sailing on the far side of the horizon." I felt a little frightened: the owl had never left me for a year and I was used to it. Could I manage without its reminders? Or would this mighty ocean which awaited me turn into a rivulet which I would scarcely notice as I stepped across it?

At this point I remembered the bandit's gift, the watch, and I froze with terror: I could no longer hear its ticking.

I pulled it out. . . . Well, of course! The watch had stopped. A year had passed and it needed winding.

I fitted the ornate key and turned it twenty times. There now, it was going. It was ticking into the New Year.

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Morroe Berger

Cairo Notebook

Metropolis

COMING to Cairo this time was different. Suddenly it seemed there was a certain majesty here: there is the dirt and poverty of all Eastern cities, of course, but there is also a metropolitan style and even a grandeur. I have always found little to distinguish among all the remains of old quarters of most Arab cities, with their inevitable narrow winding streets, bazaars, mosques, churches. It is in the "European" sections that the differences emerge; and here Cairo excels. For one thing it has size and people, broad avenues and open spaces; its combination of Oriental and Mediterranean architecture is not ashamed to reach and strain for effects. Beirut has the advantage of the Mediterranean, but remains cramped. Cairo has only the Nile, but has used it to give the city range. The difference extends to the people. After ten minutes the most sophisticated Beiruti will tell you, "But you must let me take you to my village. It's in the mountains, less than an hour from here." The Cairene doesn't think of inviting you to his village. It is probably too far away and he doesn't consider it a resort. Then again, the Cairene is more likely to have forgotten his village if he ever came from one. Cairo is a thousand years old and the village ties of many of its inhabitants are tenuous. To get a sense of space, the Beiruti has to escape to the mountains; in Cairo the city itself provides scope.

Under the sceptical eye of the world, the Egyptians took pains to run the Suez Canal themselves; but they also considered the administration and appearance of their largest city as a test. Here too they have won, for to-day Cairo is cleaner and its public services (always the butt of good and ill humour in the old days) more efficiently maintained. But, characteristically (and this is the irony of nationalism), they have made it look more European than ever.

Is what Flaubert wrote a century ago still true—*"C'est au Caire que l'Orient commence?"* Always a centre of Moslem and Arab learning, Cairo has now become an international capital. On one of my recent visits, for example, I found myself there with the following personages: U.N.O. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, World Bank President Black, and the Prime Ministers of Italy, Lebanon, and East Germany. It pleases the Egyptians to see the V.I.P.s coming and going. It gives them a feeling that they are big enough to influence the cold war (an illusion that is being assiduously fostered here). An endless procession of conferences, exhibitions, and celebrations busies the city. If it isn't an Arab League council meeting, it's an exhibition of machinery from Germany, Japan, or Czechoslovakia, or an Afro-Asian Peoples' (or Youths') Conference, or the first Arab League petrol conference (Iraq refused to participate, and one Egyptian remarked: "Why should Kassem bother? He's got the oil, so he leaves Nasser the conference").

And Cairo has turned to look south into Africa. It is clearly becoming a centre for African leaders and aspirants. One of them, a dissident from French Africa, was at the same hotel with me. He dressed in impeccably-tailored French suits to which he occasionally added a colourful African mantle for special effects. *Le Monde* was always under his arm, and he ordered everybody imperiously about, especially the Egyptians and two young African employees. He borrowed in all currencies (never repaid), and left a bill for about 150 cokes (to

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which he was addicted despite his anti-Americanism). He drank it at breakfast.

Ramadan

CAIRO is a serious city. The Westerner finds far less Oriental languor or political heat (depending on the source of his stereotypes) than he had expected. Behind the headlines of "cold war," "neutralism," and "Arab strife," the city goes about its municipal and national affairs with an earnestness that has increased as Egypt's political autonomy has grown. The normal sobriety of the city suddenly overwhelmed me, for I saw its gaiety during Bairam (the four-day celebration following the month-long fast of Ramadan) and again last Christmas. Every day of Bairam thousands of villagers come to Cairo dressed in their brightly-coloured new clothes. From my room windows I saw them arrive in noisy, donkey-drawn carts. Children swarmed as the mothers (for once allowing their colourful gowns to show underneath their black *melayas*, the long black shawl in which they drape themselves) haggled with drivers over fares. Then they moved on to Cairo's green areas on both sides of the Nile and played games and picnicked all day. (Some women even allow themselves to be seen without their *melayas*, and instead spread them between trees to keep out the hot sun.)

Ramadan, the month in which the Koran was revealed to Mohammed, means day-long fasting and night-long recreation. Everything is turnabout. "Breakfast" is at sundown and the last meal of the day is taken just before sunrise. People do not go to sleep until three in the morning (in order to get in a late meal before the day's fasting). Cairo is a city in which people usually stay up late anyway—I've seen men getting haircuts past midnight; but during Ramadan, even Cairo's late hours are extended, and the cinemas begin their last showing at one in the morning. Tempers are short during this month of fasting; but to me the wonder is not that everybody is a bit testier than usual, but that anything can go on at all when people are abstaining from food, drink, sex, tobacco. It was embarrassing to sit with friends: I ate lunch and they fingered their prayer-beads. Dinner is usually around 9, but during Ramadan Moslems eat their *iftar* (or break-fast meal—a big one, of course) around 6.30, so that it seemed impossible to get together to eat even after sundown. At such times I came to realise how much Western business and pleasure owe to coffee-breaks, tea-time, square meals, and the dinner-date.

At night, life begins again. It starts slowly with the first meal at sundown. Then there's a gap while people gird themselves for the round of eating, visiting, walking, praying, and the innumerable street entertainments of song, story, and dance. At one of Cairo's largest mosques, near *El Azhar* (the centre of Islamic learning and teaching), thousands mill about. Some pray inside; others sing and dance outside; beggars accost the strollers. Moslems do not make the Christian distinction between sacred and profane: they keep shops and offices open on Friday and the mosque is not a place only for prayer, but for rest and unsacrilegious sleep. Popular Islam is not insulated from the ordinary affairs of Moslems. At *El Azhar* Mosque itself, in the heart of one of Cairo's oldest sections, I found people in the open court praying and sleeping, students wandering about memorising their lessons, children skipping along, small groups of students squatting and listening raptly to a teacher, and a large audience being exhorted and amused in turn by a particularly clever sermon (the wizened preacher's gestures and facial movements and intonations are so expressive I can almost get the message just by looking on).

This is the old *El Azhar*, virtually unchanged since it was first built a thousand years ago. The new and changing *El Azhar* is just behind the ancient mosque: this is the University, with its modern buildings, modernising curriculum, and some of its sheikhs educated in France and Germany. (One of its graduates is studying sociology in America, which must be the ultimate in *El Azhar*'s aspirations for change.)

Night and Day

AS THE West leaves Asia and Africa, the people there become more Western. The native élites face two ways: they push the West out politically and pull the masses Westward culturally. When Egyptians now do things Westerners used to do, is that "Egyptianisation" or "Westernisation"? Maybe the evasive term "modernisation" is really better—at any rate it avoids embarrassing issues of "imitation."

Here, and now, this process has gone so far that there are dragomen who now wear coat-and-trousers instead of the *galabiya*. It is getting so that you can't easily tell them from the European businessmen in hotel lobbies. There used to be three kinds of clothing: the Egyptian

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galabiya (or flowing gown), the Western-style suit, and the striped pyjamas (among younger people mainly) as a transitional mode. Now there are hardly any pyjama-clad youth to be seen; they make a clear jump from *galabiya* to coat-and-trousers. The fez has virtually disappeared too; it is now worn only by some older men of the lower classes, a few sophisticated has-beens who live on their memories of the bygone nationalism of the Wafd and monarchy, and by servants and waiters. In a few homes of the new élite (army officers and top civilian bureaucrats) even the servants are being Westernised in dress; some have shed the *galabiya* for white jacket and black trousers. In these homes, too, French period furniture (the traditional sign of elegant taste) is fighting a losing battle against Chinese and lean Scandinavian "modern"—I sometimes see all three styles (with a few Egyptian trays and hassocks as an uneasy nod to nationalism) in the same room. In fact, Cairo has now several "modern" furniture and *objets-d'art* shops like those of the Rive Gauche, Soho, and Greenwich Village; one of them, decorated in austere black and white, calls itself *"Ego."*

"Modernism" has visibly penetrated relations between men and women; this is the most startling change of all. It is quite common to see young boys and girls walking arm-in-arm, on "dates" in the tea-rooms and even (this is less frequent) in the cinema in the evening. These are not the young people of the upper Western-educated classes, nor of the lower classes in which parents have less control. They are from the middle- and lower-middle classes, perhaps in secondary school or just graduated from one, out walking freely, although perhaps not yet with the knowledge of the girl's parents. Yet there is nothing furtive about them as they stroll along the main streets or the Nile corniches. Women are freer in general, and I saw more of them employed in offices and shops than a few years ago: in fact, Cairo is blooming with those paradigms of Western progress, the pretty front-office receptionist and the efficient female secretary.

Social life is more free-and-easy, but public entertainments still feel the stern glances of Egyptian puritanism. The belly-dancers (they prefer to be known as "Oriental dancers") are now required to cover themselves from shoulders to ankles. They therefore wear sheer muslin to keep visibility fairly good. "Modern" dancers, however, are not subjected to these restrictions; this produces some interesting anomalies in those night-clubs where both types perform. Gambling has been outlawed for Egyptians (foreigners may go to a special casino in the Mukattam hills overlooking the city, where they are admitted to the game-rooms on the presentation of a passport). Film censorship is concerned more with sex and violence than with politics, to judge by what one sees in the cinemas. Curiously enough, an old friend of mine had just become film censor, and I called on him. He is a journalist and critic, had been to Hollywood, and actually likes films. I was in his office when an advertising poster was brought in showing Brigitte Bardot in "The Night the Heavens Fell," her bare, beautiful back plunging to a pretty low point (and with a mark of violence upon it). My friend looked sceptical. The film itself had been passed by his predecessor, and he instructed an assistant to find out whether or not the scene in question had been cut, and to approve or reject it accordingly. (It must have passed because the scene was uncut in Cairo.) He is much more disturbed by the kind of Egyptian films being exported to the Arab countries; what he was planning to censor were those that weren't "much more than vehicles for belly-dancing scenes." At the same time, he had announced that Elizabeth Taylor's films were to be banned because she had bought, with a maximum of publicity, $100,000 of Israeli bonds (whether in commemoration of her late husband, Mike Todd, or in celebration of her present one, Eddie Fisher, one couldn't quite learn here). The Press was enthusiastic about the ban; many Egyptians told me they "miss her."

Egyptian films have improved steadily and are now technically fairly good. Some of the younger directors, with experience in Hollywood, Germany, France, and Italy are beginning to try relatively serious themes and techniques. There is often an interesting interplay between rural and urban settings. One I saw (and rather enjoyed) told the story of a young villager's musical success in Cairo: there is an impressive finale in which a 100-piece orchestra played a Western symphonic arrangement of an Oriental theme, conducted by an old man from the village, a great composer of Oriental music who at the last moment foils the villains by unexpectedly showing up at the Opera House in white-tie-and-tails. In as much as he had appeared only in a *galabiya* up to that point, it took me a few moments to recognise him and then to recover from the shock, but the audience took it all gleefully in its stride. The film extolled

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the village as a place of refuge and solid virtues, but it did not deprecate the city. The villagers make good in the big town; but the lesson is apparently not that the village conquers the city, it simply *becomes* the city.

As for the film which Hollywood has invited the U.A.R. to submit in the competition for the 1960 *Oscar* awards, I attended a special showing of *The Call of the Curlew* (based on a tragedy by Egypt's great man of letters, Taha Hussein, and produced and directed by one of the leading film-makers, Barakat). It seemed to me a beautiful morality tale of the innocence of two village girls, and a sheer delight in its sensitive direction, composition of village scenes, and photography. It sustains a mood of deep simplicity and tragedy almost until the end, when the requirements of conventional morality (so deadening to film-making everywhere) make themselves felt.

A few years ago Cairo had mainly two kinds of night-club: expensive ones for foreigners and Westernised Egyptians (with only "European attractions" and announcements in French); and cheaper ones for most Egyptians (Oriental dancing, Arabic sketches, singing). Now the first kind feature an Oriental dancer and announce the acts in Arabic as well as French, while the second kind have added European attractions, cut down on belly-dancing, and announce in French as well as Arabic. Old-fashioned local colour has become so scarce that a new night-club successfully cultivates it as folklore for the sophisticated: the place is done up in tented, sumptuous Oriental style in the desert just beyond the Pyramids.

At a time when Egypt has begun to develop a genuinely native governing class and political institutions for the first time in several thousand years, modernisation goes on at a faster pace than any foreign occupying power would have had the courage to impose. The impulse to *Egyptianise* and *Arabicise* began generations ago with the government departments, and has since penetrated one recess of life after another, the visible and the hidden—the schools, Press, street-names and signs, shops (even the wrapping-paper), packaged foods, household goods. In the effort to reduce dependence upon imports, a large number of products are now made locally, including clothing, furniture, small machinery, small-arms, ammunition.

There used to be two Oriental ways of life, for the poor and for the rich, each with its own style, each isolated in its own way from that of the foreigner and the Westernised Egyptian. With the headlong rush to modernisation, these two ways are approaching each other as they move towards a dead centre of what might be called "Egyptian modern." Upper-class Oriental elegance in stately homes and gardens behind imposing walls (described and illustrated by French and British travellers since the massive volumes written by savants who accompanied Napoleon and the donkeys to Egypt) gives way to flashy and colourful villas which the owners are too proud to hide. Lower-class simplicity gives way to easy sophistication, and to boredom with old pastimes, as the mass media reach out further and deeper. We in the West, who have been through this process before, may regret it, but Egyptians feel that if this is corruption, they're going to make the most of it. Of the spiritual joys of poverty they've had and heard enough; now on to the joys of physical acquisitions and plain materialism. Life is to become easier, more pleasant. Things are in the saddle.

Intellectuals

PROBING the society for points of weakness and strength, the Egyptian leaders have since 1954 paid very special attention to "the intelligentsia," to novelists, poets, painters, professors, journalists. This new solicitude has given intellectuals some benefits; it has meant greater encouragement in the form of jobs, prizes, conferences, discussions, publications, etc. But it has also meant greater surveillance in a narrow political sense (though not in broad ideological matters). Various "schools of thought" are free to develop in the fields of literature, the arts, and in education. But direct expression of *specific* political ideas is subject to the same restrictions which govern all political activity.

The "socialist critique of modern society" has gained general currency among Egyptian intellectuals (as it has throughout Asia and Africa). This ideological swing began long before the Egyptian *rapprochement* with Russia and China in 1955; and it has survived the hostility which has now broken out, only four years later. The change, however, caught some intellectuals in the period between two of my recent visits. The arrest early last year of hundreds of Communists and fellow-travellers, some of them intellectuals even in high government posts, was a sudden turn which many people thought "unfair."

"Why," they asked, "should writers be

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punished now for saying what they were encouraged to say only a few months ago?"

A good question. The régime's answer, I suppose, would be that praising the "people's democracy" is one thing and organising Communist cells quite another, that espousing "socialist realism" in the novel is not quite the same as taking Soviet money. But this defence assumes that the prisoners did join or organise cells or did take Soviet money, and it is precisely this assumption which many of my intellectual friends, clearly unnerved by the swoop, question. In any case, the whole affair carried a lesson for writers and artists similarly situated. Don't be too eager to run to the head of the class at each turning! Dignity requires a certain reticence. It's healthier, anyway. The older hands, who've been through many turnings, know better how to survive, even how to thrive. The wizened ones stayed on an even keel. Abbas Mahmoud El Akkad is in his seventies now, a self-taught poet, novelist, critic, and writer on a dozen subjects. All through the phase of "Friendship with the East," he continued his attacks on Communism and Fascism. Others like the novelist Mahmoud Teymour maintained a "proper" cordiality with the East, but on a purely cultural, traditional basis. It was the eager ones, inexperienced and over-ideological, who were hurt or embarrassed when the change came.

The naïveté of some younger novelists and journalists is touching. They proudly proclaim their "Marxism," by which they mean only anti-Colonialism and a belief in the Welfare State; old-guard L.S.E. "Laskianism" is coupled with admiration for the Soviet Union and a defence of its treatment of intellectuals.

"What is so wonderful about Russia," one student was saying, "is that there the writer is a public hero: he gets his house, he gets his money—he is a man who matters."

"That is all very well," I replied, "but surely in exchange he sacrifices his freedom of thought."

"Not at all. He is free to say the things that are really worth saying—the things that he wants to say."

"Aren't you trying to have the best of both worlds? For the West you demand the freedom to be subversive, while you defend this cultural surveillance in the people's democracies."

"Well, of course," he replied triumphantly. "Just because they are people's democracies, the writer of the people can speak the truth without hedging."

"Oh, do you honestly think that?" I said. "What about your concern for the underdog? Aren't there any underdogs in your socialist countries who ought to have their say? Or do Marxist rules become invalid where Marxist régimes take over? That's a fine dialectic!"

He looked puzzled. A shy grin flashed across his face, and then once more an expression of defiant suspicion.

"You're just teasing," he said, as he lit a cigarette.

"Oh, no, I assure you that I am perfectly serious. Look, if you want to be a Marxist, at any rate be an honest one. Granted that the Marxists in Russia can only apply their doctrines to the world outside; but you are not in Russia, so you can test your principles anywhere—Russia, Egypt, America, South Africa—anywhere you like."

At that he gave up, nettled but unshaken. And his obstinate, doctrinaire approach was typical of the younger left-wing intellectuals. They still have not learnt how to square the theories in their Marxist textbooks with the complex realities of their situation in the hub of the U.A.R. They were only slightly shaken by Nasser's attacks on "Soviet imperialism" and "Communist atheism," but even this campaign had its effect—coming as it did just after the Pasternak affair (which was well publicised in Egypt even before the Soviets were accused of "opposing Arab nationalism and self-determination"). An Arabic translation of *Dr. Zhivago* appeared in Beirut and sold quickly in Cairo; it could be bought even from newsboys on street corners.

"Why talk of freedom to us? We're a nation of poor peasants! We need bread!"

"If you don't have freedom, will that get you bread?"

"What can a peasant do with freedom if he's hungry?"

"He can complain."

"Will that get him more bread?"

"What else will? But you and I aren't peasants. Are *you* starving for bread? Why are *you* so willing to forget about freedom—so willing to say you don't care?"

"We can't afford it, we need economic development first, then we'll get freedom."

"But do you think you will make real and swift progress without thinking freely, criticising plans, learning by trial and error openly, exchanging ideas? What makes you think you can get freedom by denying its value? And why

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do you want your economic development?"

"So our people can have a higher standard of living. . . . So we can eliminate want, disease, and ignorance. So we can live in dignity."

"Can you live in dignity without freedom?"

"No, but first we need economic development. . . ."

The régime itself encourages talk of "socialism." Nasser repeated a favourite theme in a Victory Day speech at Port Said two days before Christmas: "We want to establish a socialist, democratic, co-operative society. . . ." But socialism is not precisely defined. It continues to attract intellectuals despite the anti-Communist trend, and a move is under way to establish an "Arab socialist study group" with the Government's blessing. It is not likely to do more than discuss; last winter Nasser accepted the resignations of four Syrian socialist ministers. "Socialist talk," yes; "socialist politics," no. So the company directors I talked with do not expect Government take-overs of private firms; that was for "foreign firms" (and even in those cases Egyptianisation is not necessarily nationalisation).

"Pragmatiyah"

THIS sort of discussion is becoming somewhat *passé* among the students, whose political inclinations are controlled or channelled by the authorities. Since political parties are banned, the students cannot be used openly by their more practised elders, and this has reduced interest in politics. Besides, a deliberate policy of extensive examinations and stricter discipline has made it more difficult for student ringleaders to carry along the uncommitted and the indifferent. The result is that the Egyptians are increasingly less concerned with domestic Arab politics, and it is left to the Jordanians and Iraqis to continue the celebrated tradition of student demonstrations. Indeed, sex may be replacing politics on the campus. "A good thing," many people say. As they go in more systematically for national planning, the Egyptians have discovered the "manpower problem," and find they need engineers and scientists more than eloquent lawyers and wordy journalists, the ancient mainstays of political agitation. Everyone, including many professors I spoke with, appear in fact to have abandoned efforts to reform the three state universities.

A plan is under way to introduce something really new in Egyptian higher education: a non-governmental university (though the government will put up part of the capital needed to get it started). It is to charge high fees, set up high requirements for admission, maintain a high level of instruction and high standards of student performance. It will be difficult to bring off, but I was impressed by the Egyptian determination to do it.

"Intellectual life" in Cairo goes on largely outside the universities. Though the government's increasing interest in the arts and sciences has led it to create new agencies to encourage (and control) them, the older institutions continue with varying degrees of vigour. Whatever the source of the energy which created them, these venerable bodies were really international; they too, have become "Egyptianised," but their cosmopolitan heritage is still somewhat in evidence. *L'Institut de l'Egypte*, for example, is now functioning again (after the trials of the Suez affair), but under exclusive Egyptian direction; its prototype was established by Napoleon in 1798, produced those magnificent volumes in *Description de l'Egypte*, and went out with the French in 1801. For the next six decades attempts to revive it came to nought. In 1859 it was finally re-established at Alexandria under a slightly different name but with the original purposes; it was moved to Cairo in 1880 and the original name restored in 1918. *The Academy of the Arabic Language* was never, like the *Institut*, under the control of a foreign government; yet it has also been "Egyptianised" in a sense by the determination of Egyptians to become less dependent upon the Academy's foreign members. It is still involved, I was told by one of its leading members, Dr. Ibrahim Bayoumi Madhkour, in its major task of "protecting the language" and making it able "to meet the needs of modern life"; it sponsors general and specific dictionaries, encourages literature by giving awards, and conducts research, all in a fastidious Gallic attempt to maintain "standards for usage." It is "flexible," however, and does not insist on pure Arabic roots for everything. Some time ago, for example, a pure Arabic construct was proposed for the word *pragmatism*. It didn't take. The savants then contented themselves with what was readily accepted, *pragmatiyah* (which has only the Arabic suffix).

Nationalism

EVERYONE tells me that Egypt is indeed "pragmatic," that it does not "slavishly follow" any particular ideology, that the régime

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selects its policies without reference to formal systems adopted elsewhere. "Nationalism" is the guiding-light. Egypt, or the United Arab Republic, or "all the Arabs" must find the ways and means for becoming independent of "outside control and influence." Thus, in Egypt, the régime tries to stimulate private enterprise; at the same time, it buys up shares in existing or new firms, and encourages co-operatives to supply goods and services in competition with small commercial or professional interests.

Cairo, President Nasser told a journalist the other day, "has become the base and capital . . . of all Arab struggles from Oman to Algeria. . . . Few leaders in other Arab countries would dispute the point; even fewer would deny it publicly. To-day in the paper I find the dentists of Egypt thundering their defiance for the opening of "Algeria Week":

> On this occasion, when free men all over the world declare their support for the Algerian people who are fighting imperialism . . . Egyptian dentists declare their support for the struggle of Algeria and denounce the barbaric war which is being launched by the forces of treachery against humanity.

Just to fill things in properly, they added painlessly:

> Dentists declare also that they will spare no effort to support right over evil. . . .

Arab nationalism, to be sure, is directed "against the West." The Arabs, clearly, have a very special place in the relations between the West and the "new nations" of Asia and Africa. The West became involved with Afro-Asia and Africa only through its own expansion in the modern era. But the contract between the West and the Moslem Arabs began with the *latter's* expansion more than thirteen hundred years ago. When the Arabs fell under Western control they had already known what it meant to control European territory in the name of their own highly developed civilisation. Nationalism feeds on historic memories: there is an Arab record of an earlier era of equality, even superiority. The intensity is fed too by religious sentiment, for even when Arab nationalism is couched in secular terms it has strong Islamic overtones. These, I believe, must appeal to the millions still untouched by the winds of modern doctrine. It's not merely a question of "remembering the Crusades" (though some religious leaders I've listened to still speak of them as though they happened yesterday). Moslems consider their religion a perfection of Judaism and Christianity; it is the final crowning of these Scriptural religions by new revelations to the last of the prophets, Mohammed.

But if this is Arab nationalism as it scowls across the Mediterranean, there is another. It is the nationalism *within* the Arab world, and it is best seen in Egypt. Am I naïve in thinking it simply the effort to create a nation out of a mass? How else should one go about the creation of a genuine nation-state in the face of poverty, disease, indifference to the world outside and absorption in private affairs, in the face of lack of education and a sense of community to sustain hard work and new habits beyond the momentary excitement of a harangue?

This is why, I suppose, I am always optimistic here in Cairo and so pessimistic when I return to the West. Nationalism looks better in its own habitat. Here it does not seem to be connected with "extremism," anti-Westernism, and chauvinism—but with health programmes, industrialisation, land reform, civic improvement, schools, etc.

Abroad, nationalism appears immoderate and brash. At home, it almost strikes one as modest and afraid.

As one of Egypt's leading economic planners told me, "What do we want? But can't you in the West see our plight? We can't expect to achieve your standards in generations. Probably never. All we can hope to do is to raise our lowest levels of misery just a bit, and to give our people some hope. We can't ever 'catch up' with the West—you're even now industrialising faster than we are. . . ."

Nasser

CAN Nasser bring it off? Can he keep Egypt and the Arabs neutral in international politics—"liberate" the Arabs still under colonial influence—industrialise and raise living standards and create a modern nation in Egypt? Whatever Western sceptics and critics may think, a large part of the Middle East, I suspect, still believes he can achieve enough of this ambitious programme to warrant faith in him.

Why does Gamal Abdul Nasser seem so strong?

1. His background and personality inspire Arab confidence in him: he is one of them by birth, training, and sentiment; he is energetic

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and courageous and tireless, and no one doubts his personal honesty.

2. He has already won "historic victories" in ridding Egypt of a dynasty that nationalists considered alien, in ending the British occupation, in managing to hold Egypt together during the 1956 attack, in getting Soviet aid (and keeping the West interested too). He has dared to humiliate those who have humiliated the Arabs, and he has survived. To Arabs he has the *baraka* upon him, a blessing that seems to immunise him against evil and opposition—a man obviously to go along with.

3. He has changed the spirit and pace of life in Egypt (even if he may have raised hopes more than he has living standards). He is a projection of the "Arab personality," of its restless dreams and ambitions. He has defied the West as the leader of a country without oil (just as the average Arab is really without oil in a region that produces almost a quarter of the world's supply and has nearly two-thirds of its reserves). He thus stands, whatever his official policies or personal intentions may be, as a symbol of Arab hopes for a more equable national and individual distribution of wealth. "Whom up till now has this wealth benefited?" The question is always rhetorical. The reply is always handy. Mainly the less advanced Arab countries. Only a few Arab rulers. The vast majority up till now has not even had a "hope for a share."

So it is not only Nasser and nationalism that keep the Arab world stirring. There is the ancient poverty, yes, but coupled now with bursting hopes. There are the age-old economic necessities, but now with new economic possibilities—and the perspective of political unity. Nasser's strength ultimately is, I suspect, that the Arab in Kuwait as well as in Cairo wants "Arab oil for all Arabs" (including Egypt).

Communism

A YEAR ago no one in Cairo expected that Nasser would criticise the Soviet Union so soon and so severely as he did. At the height of his campaign against Khrushchev last spring I went to see one of Nasser's chief lieutenants, Colonel Anwar El Sadat, one of the original twelve officers who seized power in 1952. At his house on the Pyramids road he seemed relaxed, wore a checked sports-shirt, slacks, and sandals, looked like a suburbanite in Surrey or Long Island.

"This fight against Communism," he said, with appropriate gravity, "is a very serious step for us. We are a small country, and we cannot light-heartedly attack a big one. But we must defend our independence. For us there is no turning back now. This is not a temporary move! It is strategy—not tactics." Nasser himself had just said in a speech that he had realised the Russians were "interfering" in Arab affairs early in 1958, when the Syrian Communists planned the take-over which was prevented by the union of Egypt and Syria in February. For almost a year, even after the Russians shifted to Iraq, he said,

> We were trying to convince ourselves that the Communist parties in our countries were independent from international Communism. We found out that they were not independent. . . . They carry out orders and instructions for the liquidation of patriotic and nationalist elements in order to place our country inside the zone of Communist influence. . . .

This is hardly a discovery, of course, but Nasser explained that he did not want (if he could help it) to clash with the Soviets because of Arab Communist activity. In the end, to be sure, he found he was compelled to, and he showed courage in carrying out his promise that if the Russians "interfered" in Arab domestic affairs he would oppose them as he opposed the West. "We do not," he has told religious leaders in Damascus,

> interfere with the affairs of the Soviet Union, nor do we support one faction of the sons of the Soviet Union against another faction. So, if the head of the Soviet Government intervenes to-day in order to support a small faction of the sons of our country against the unanimity of our people, we cannot accept that by any means.

The new turn both pleased and worried intelligent Egyptians. They have no love for Communism's severity or Russia's style of life. Several who had been there on missions since 1955 were impressed by "technological achievements" but repelled by Russian social policy. They still admire Western liberal approaches to education, family life, sex, industrial relations. These "liberal ideas" (which they absorbed in schooling at home and in the West) they saw rejected in the U.S.S.R. They were relieved by the new turn; pro-Russian policies had made them uneasy even though they agreed with "positive neutralism" and anti-Westernism. But now they began to speak of "Egypt's isolation": "Can we fight all sides?" Neutralism seemed to have gone wildly off course. It was

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intended to create good relations with both East and West, after the Indian model, or even the Yugoslavian. Now Egypt seemed to have achieved the ultimate in international diplomacy —a neutralism that produced bad relations with both sides.

Early in 1959 it was clear that Cairo was moving towards the resumption of friendly ties with the West which culminated in the World Bank loan at the end of the year. Cairo was jubilant, and the holiday season seemed gayer and more relaxed. "Please tell the West not to abandon us again no matter whose the fault," the wife of a retired diplomat told me. Echoing the sentiments of many intellectuals, businessmen, Government officials (and the tourist industry), she added what I could see for myself: "When we're friendly with the West, there's more freedom for us here." True enough. The more realistic view of Soviet goals has meant less freedom for Communists but more for everyone else.

Can Egypt's relations with the major powers (and with the Arab world) be stabilised for a time to give the régime a breathing-space in which to concentrate on raising living standards and on perfecting the union with Syria? Again, can "international Communism" replace Israel as the cement of Arab nationalism? Nor is the Communist danger merely a matter of foreign policy. Poverty still breeds general discontent, and it can no longer be eliminated by jailing a few hundred ringleaders. There is much talent and energy in Egypt for promoting economic welfare, but this needs time: to create jobs in the cities for an urban population growing rapidly (high birth-rate, migration from the poverty-stricken countryside); to stop the fragmenting of land-holdings; to increase the cultivable land. A powerful and well-publicised attack on these problems might now bring even more glory than regional and international ventures.

There's some evidence that the old nationalist slogans are no longer considered enough. In his recent Port Said speech, Nasser said that nationalism must go from political to social goals, to build a "better life" and so to prove to the "world at large that Arab nationalism is a constructive movement. . . ." There is here more than a hint of response to criticism by foreigners —and Arabs—that nationalism has lacked "social content." And Nasser struck another note new to Arabs and Moslems, almost an "optimistic humanism" which certainly had more in it from Condorcet than Ibn Khaldun: "The limitless horizons of human progress are opened before us and our past tardiness should not impede our present progress. . . ." A new departure? Perhaps my first naïve impression, but I found that not a few Egyptian intellectuals were involved in the same interpretation.

The army is still, from all accounts here, an unknown quantity ideologically. Armies want power and prestige, but the officers of the newly-independent countries in Asia and Africa aren't quite like those of Europe, involved in long-standing military traditions. Intellectually and culturally, Egyptian officers compare favourably with other leadership groups. Going into military service is usually based on motives pretty much the same as those which impel others into the Civil Service: it is not the result of some heroic, adventurous complex. Many leading officers (and not merely those who were most prominent in the 1952 revolt) are now in administrative and cultural posts and they can hold their own with officials of other backgrounds. I know one army officer who is a well-known novelist and the administrator of several cultural organisations; another has become a "public-relations expert." Still another, Sarwat Okasha, is Minister of Culture and National Guidance. In his office I saw oils and water-colours hanging, heaped up, standing on the floor all around. From a gramophone near his desk came Vivaldi's "Four Seasons."

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POETRY

To a Brother in the Mystery

Circa 1290

The world of God has turned its two stone faces
One my way, one yours. Yet we change places
A little, slowly. After we had halved
The work between us, those grotesques I carved
There in the first bays clockwise from the door
That was such work as I got credit for
At York and Beverley: thorn-leaves twined and bent
To frame some small and human incident
Domestic or of venery. Each time I crossed
Since then, however, underneath the vast
Span of our Mansfield limestone, to appraise
How you cut stone, my emulous hard gaze
Has got to know you as I know the stone
Where none but chisels talk for us. I have grown
Of my own way of thinking yet of yours,
Seeing your leafage burgeon there by the doors
With a light that, flickering, trenches the voussoir's line;
Learning your pre-harmonies, design
Nourished by exuberance, and fine-drawn
Severity that is tenderness, I have thought,
Looking at these last stalls that I have wrought
This side of the chapter's octagon, I find
No hand but mine at work, yet mine refined
By yours, and all the difference: my motif
Of foliate form, your godliness in leaf.
    And your last spandrel proves the debt incurred
Not all on the one side. There I see a bird
Pecks at your grapes, and after him a fowler,
A boy with a bow. Elsewhere, your eaves discover
Of late blank mask-like faces. We infect
Each other then, doubtless to good effect . . .
And yet, take care: this cordial knack bereaves
The mind of all its sympathy with leaves,
Even with stone. I would not take away
From your peculiar mastery, if I say
A sort of coldness is the core of it,
A sort of cruelty; that prerequisite
Perhaps I rob you of, and in exchange give
What? Vulgarity's prerogative,
Indulgence towards the frailties it indulges,
Humour called "wryness" that acknowledges

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Its own complicity. I can keep in mind
So much at all events, can always find
Fallen humanity enough, in stone,
Yes, in the medium; where we cannot own
Crispness, compactness, elegance, but the feature
Seals it and signs it work of human nature
And fallen though redeemable. You, I fear,
Will find you bought humanity too dear
At the price of some light leaves, if you begin
To find your handling of them growing thin,
Insensitive, brittle. For the common touch
Though it warms, coarsens. Never care so much
For leaves or people, but you care for stone
A little more. The medium is its own
Thing, and not all a medium, but the stuff
Of mountains; cruel, obdurate, and rough.

Donald Davie

Solitary Travel

Breakfasting alone in Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta,
Dacca, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, Cape Town,
But always under water or glass, I find
Such a beginning makes the day seem blind.

The hotels are all the same, it might be pawpaw
Instead of grapefruit, different flowers on the tables,
But the waiters, coffee-coloured or yellow or black,
All smile but, should you smile, give nothing back.

And taking coffee alone in the indistinguishable airports,
Though the land outside be empty or man-crammed, oven or icebox,
I feel the futility of moving on
To what, though not a conclusion, is foregone.

But the Customs clamour, the stamp is raised, the passport
Like a chess game played by mail records the latest
Move of just one square. Which is surely seen
By the black bishop and the unsleeping queen.

And so to the next hotel to the selfsame breakfast,
Same faces of manager, waiter, fellow-traveller,
Same lounge or bar whose test tube walls enfold
The self-indulgent disenchanted old.

Time and the will are frozen. If I could only
Escape into icebox or oven, escape among people
Before tomorrow from this neutral zone
Where all tomorrows must be faced alone . . . .

Louis MacNeice

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Richard L. Walker

Chairman Mao

and the Cult of Personality

At the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Chinese Communist régime in early October 1959, a special chorus of more than five hundred voices, including representatives of China's national minority peoples, was joined by a full Western-style symphony orchestra in a setting of unmatched splendour to perform the song that has almost supplanted the Communist national anthem:

The East shines red,
The sun rises,
China has brought forth a Mao Tse-tung.
He plans blessings for the people,
He is the great saviour of the people.

The performance was a fitting symbol of the fever-pitch the cult of Mao had reached at that time. In proclamations and verbose statements for the anniversary all the top leaders hailed the infinite wisdom and supreme achievements of Mao Tse-tung. Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai (Number Two and Three men in the ruling Communist hierarchy) emphasised Mao's absolute leadership and supreme qualities. The chorus of praise included a special article on the Party in the *People's Daily* of September 28th, 1959, by Liu Lan-t'ao (Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee). Liu's article indicated the extremes to which the official sanction for the cult of Mao has gone in the most populous country in the world:

> Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the most outstanding exponent of the heroic proletariat of our country, the most distinguished representative of our superior traditions in the entire history of our great nation, a beacon in our country's road to Communism, and the most outstanding contemporary revolutionist, statesman, and theoretician of Marxism-Leninism. He has creatively enriched the treasures of Marxism-Leninism on a series of important questions. . . .
>
> The 600 million or more people of our country have placed in him their hopes for their own happiness and future and considered him the incarnation of Communism and truth and the symbol of invincibility. The influence, wisdom, and experience of Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the system of thought created by him by combining Marxism-Leninism with the actual practices of the Chinese revolution are the most valuable treasures of our Party and people. The warm affection for the Party leader is in full conformity with our ardent love for our Party, class, people, and great motherland.

The parallels between the Stalin cult in the Soviet Union, which Khrushchev laid bare before the world, and the now full-blown Mao cult in China are sufficiently precise to give pause and to occasion real caution and concern throughout the world. As in the case of Stalin, the Communists have had tremendous success in projecting abroad an image of an amiable and smiling Mao Tse-tung, a dedicated Communist to be sure, but flexible and popular among the people. The image has been an unchanging one; few people have paused to consider the impact of a long period of supreme

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power and success upon the man, an impact that few despots with long rule have evaded in the history of the world.

At the time of the tenth anniversary celebrations the Chinese Communist régime was beset with numerous difficulties. Its prestige and relations with many areas of the world had deteriorated. It had antagonised India, Indonesia, Japan, and the United Arab Republic. The coolness toward visiting Soviet Premier Khrushchev reflected strains in the Sino-Soviet alliance that had been exposed somewhat earlier to the full view of the outside world for the first time. Peiping's aggressive and intransigent attitude is frequently explained in terms of the "youth of the régime" and as a manifestation of bumptious adolescence. Although this can be a convenient explanation for the seemingly irrational and unreasonable behaviour of a régime such as Mao's, it is doubtful whether the analogy with the human life-cycle is valid, and in any event it is inapplicable in the case of the Chinese Communist leadership. Mao Tse-tung and his close associates in the top hierarchy of the Chinese Communist Party have been in power a long time. They have presumed to speak as the government of China for more than three decades, and Mao himself has been the uncontested supreme leader of Communism in China since he became Chairman of the Party at the Tsunyi conference of January 13th, 1935, during the famous Long March.

In the years immediately ahead, the outside world must contend with a China whose pose and relations will be determined not by the relative youth of the People's Government but by a top leadership that has aged in power. The key figure in that leadership is Chairman Mao, and it is surely important that those who must cope with him be prepared to deal with the realities of his personality rather than the unchanging image created by his cult in China. There is increasing evidence that his long tenure as the oracle of Communism in China and his ten years of successful absolutism during which he has seen the full mobilisation of China's myriad millions and the building of industrial and military strength on the Chinese mainland have left their mark. A sifting of materials becoming increasingly available indicates that far from being the benign and popular father symbol portrayed in Peiping's internal and external propaganda, Mao Tse-tung is becoming increasingly cantankerous and more affected by those illusions of grandeur and infallibility that have turned other despots into pathological figures. The pattern is one which may cause as much worry for his Soviet allies as for the outside world. The cult of Mao bears an intimate relation to events as they have transpired in China, and while it does not explain everything, it does carry implications for the future which dare not be ignored.

The Song of Praise

THE elevation of Mao Tse-tung into the symbolic figurehead for the aspirations of Communism in China began shortly after he and his comrade-in-arms Chu Teh had established their Soviet base in Kiangsi province in August 1929. By 1934 Communists and fellow-travellers in the Western world were singing the praises of the Chinese leader. In New York that year wood-block prints of the likeness of Mao Tse-tung, "the leader of the Chinese people," were sold for a dollar each. The real development of the cult of Mao, however, began following the establishment of Communist headquarters at Yenan in December 1936. The exigencies of the civil war and the war against Japan, the need for discipline and unity among the many intellectuals and youth who came to Communist areas, and Mao's deep admiration for Stalin which came into full flower during the Yenan period all combined to encourage the build-up of Mao as a central source of wisdom and leadership. The Communist cadres studied his works closely, along with those of Stalin and Liu Shao-ch'i, during the Party "rectification movement" of 1942–44. In Stalin-like fashion Mao issued dogma on art, literature, philosophy, and many other topics. His works were quoted along with those of Lenin and Stalin as official gospel for interpreting all developments.

By 1949, when the Communists came to power, Mao towered over all his colleagues as the personification of the hopes and dreams for a new China under a rule he promised would be a "united front." His picture adorned the trucks in which the Communist troops moved into Chinese cities and was quickly given the central place of honour in all public buildings, shrines, and in Chinese homes. The success of the Communist surge to power encouraged sycophantic outpourings in which history was rewritten to prove that from the very beginning Mao had been correct and wise, that he was indeed heir to the traditional Chinese "mandate of heaven."

This was at the time the Stalin cult was

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approaching its peak, and Mao's name and picture were frequently linked on an equal basis with the "great Stalin." A key writer in the deification of Mao and Stalin, for example, was Ch'en Po-ta, who in mid-1958 was appointed editor of the new theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, *Red Flag* (*Hung Ch'i*). In his *Mao Tse-tung on the Chinese Revolution* in 1951, Mao's works and leadership are characterised as "vivid," "brilliant," and "correct," and of "universal significance," following in the footsteps of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. The following year, 1952, Ch'en Po-ta published another tract, *Stalin and the Chinese Revolution*, in which he repeated Mao's advice to the Chinese people with regard to Stalin: "We must hail him, we must support him, and we must learn from him."

The cult of Mao was given full encouragement throughout China after the Communists came to power. His writings were committed to memory and intensive study of what was termed "the Thought of Mao Tse-tung" was substituted for other courses in the schools and colleges. New writings or anniversaries of earlier writings were the occasion for nation-wide campaigns for renewed study. Each new programme of the régime was linked to his name. When a campaign for the development of mutual-aid teams in the countryside was launched in 1950, letters were reported to have poured in giving Chairman Mao credit for the good results. A letter from the members of such a team in Shansi province, for example, was printed in July that year: "Now indeed we realise that to do what Chairman Mao advocates is always right and good. We see the proof before our eyes. Our poor valley is growing richer and richer." Again, in 1952, a locomotive that was reported to have covered 200,000 kilometres without a breakdown was named for Mao Tse-tung. By 1956, Mao had indeed been turned into a figure of almost divine proportions as each achievement of the Communist régime redounded to his credit and "rightists" or imperialists were blamed for any failures.

THE Khrushchev secret speech (February 1956) on Stalin's crimes was bound to cause serious repercussions in Communist China. The first overt reaction, an editorial in the *People's Daily* of April 5th, 1956, was cautious. While it recognised Stalin's faults and the dangers of the cult of the individual, it stressed the Soviet dictator's merits and pointed out "Marxism-Leninism acknowledges that leaders play an important part in history." At the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, Politburo member Teng Hsiao-p'ing asserted, "In our Party there is a long tradition of collective leadership as opposed to individual decision." Liu Shao-ch'i claimed that the Chinese Communist Party had not made a single mistake since the Tsunyi conference of January 1935, and though he too proclaimed the Party's devotion to the principle of collective leadership, he pointed out, "Comrade Mao Tse-tung has played the great rôle of helmsman in our revolution and enjoys a high prestige in the whole Party and among all the people of the country." The Chinese leadership did play down references to Stalin following the Khrushchev speech, but in contrast with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, his picture continued to be displayed. During the remainder of 1956 and in 1957, the year in which Mao encouraged critics to speak out in what became known as the "Hundred Flowers" period, the cult of the leader was soft-pedalled in China. But glowing tributes to Chairman Mao did continue, and especially in response to some of the criticisms of those "rightists" who had accepted the invitation to speak freely and were unexpectedly blunt in what they had to say in mid-1957.

With the launching of the "Great Leap Forward" campaign in 1958, the cult of Mao developed with renewed intensity. All the restraint and caution occasioned by the Khrushchev secret speech were seemingly abandoned. By 1959 the *People's Daily* and other Communist publications on the Chinese mainland had made some significant changes in formulations about Mao. A standard reference had formerly been "The Communist Party of China under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung." Now frequent reference was made to the leadership or decisions of "The Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung." The expression "great" (*wei-ta*) was applied to both the Party and Mao. By the end of 1959 the two were of apparently equal importance.

Beginning in January 1958, the régime's propaganda media began to play up accounts of Chairman Mao's inspection tours around the country. Mao, who had formerly avoided publicity about his comings and goings, preferring an almost mystical aloofness, began to have his activities reported regularly and in detail in the press. His tour of several provinces from Septem-

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ber 10th to 29th, 1958, for example, brought dispatches every day about the impact of his "warm personality." A reporter for the *People's Daily* who accompanied Chairman Mao throughout the trip wrote a summary of popular reaction in the issue of November 4th:

> Now the people of the whole country resolutely believe in and support the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. This kind of sincere and fervent love for Chairman Mao is something rare in ancient and modern times, and in this country and in places outside China. . . . *"Chairman Mao is like the sun, giving light wherever it shines."* This is a correct statement. Wherever Chairman Mao goes, tumultuous rejoicing follows him and is very much in evidence.

An interesting aspect of the renewed vigour of the Mao cult beginning in 1958 has been the publication of biographical material by former associates who now seem to remember many remarkable early feats to add epic proportions to the Chinese leader's whole career. For example, Dr. Fu Lien-chang, Vice-Minister of Public Health, in a work entitled *I Was With Chairman Mao* (published in 1959), recalls some experiences in the Soviet areas in 1931 when he was a physician and in charge of a hospital and medical training centre for the Communist forces. He apparently had the foresight to address Mao as "Chairman Mao" even before the Communist chief had assumed the title. He recalls Mao's ability to understand and give advice in the medical field: "His simple advice immediately solved the problem that had been worrying me for days." In another passage he notes that "After my several talks with Chairman Mao, I felt that my approach to questions had become far steadier," and dutifully belittling his own work states, "Thus under the personal direction of Chairman Mao, we trained the first batch of medical personnel for the Red Army." In 1959, the International Book Store in Peiping advertised a new book by Chen Chang-fen entitled *On the Long March with Chairman Mao*, promising the reader "revealing sidelights on the character of this great revolutionary leader." Chou Shih-chao, Vice-Governor of Hunan, who knew Mao in his early years in that province has written articles in praise of his "heroic and lofty character and his sincerity and magnanimity."

If the tales of Mao's remarkable achievements in the past do not convince the Chinese people of his embodiment of all good qualities and superior abilities, the accounts of his current activities in 1958 and 1959 were calculated to make at least some impression in that direction. With regard to his physical prowess, the press reported in January 1958 that he had taken a plough in hand and astonished all observers with his straight furrows. It was claimed that Chairman Mao had swum across the mighty Yangtze River on seven separate occasions in September of the same year. The increasing frequency of references to Mao's good health in 1958 caused outsiders to wonder whether Chairman Mao was ill. The *Wen-hui Pao* of Shanghai, for example, told of Mao's visit with a group of women activists on October 8th, 1958: "No one could take her gaze away from the Chairman. Yang Chüeh-cheng kept staring at the Chairman, trying to impress the Chairman's lofty appearance deeply on her mind. Chairman Mao was wearing a white shirt. The glowing complexion of his face, his pitch-black hair, his high spirits and vitality all gave the impression of very good health." It is interesting to note that the particular attention to Mao's appearance as "very robust, much younger than his years" occurred just before and continued after the announcement on December 10th, 1958, that the Party's Central Committee had accepted Mao's decision not to serve another term as Chairman of the formal state structure. The announcement pointed out that Mao would continue his work as Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and affirmed that he "will remain the leader of the entire people of various nationalities even when he no longer holds the post of chairmanship of the state."

Mao's replacement by Liu Shao-ch'i as head of state in April 1959 only intensified the eulogising of the Chairman. An example of the proportions it had reached by the end of the year is contained in a message sent to Mao (by the National Conference of Representatives of Advanced Groups and Workers in Socialist Construction meeting in Peiping November 8th, 1959):

> *Dear and respected Chairman Mao:* You are to us a bright sun! You give us zeal with a bright future. You are a guide to victory. With you, we can go ahead at full speed, with nothing to hinder our progress. Whenever we think of the Party and you, our confidence rises and our bodies swell with vigour, making it possible for us to overcome all difficulties and achieve anything. How happy and proud we are to live in this great Mao Tse-tung era!

In February 1960, the Communist régime launched a new campaign among the youth who

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would live in that great era to study Mao's writings. With all the zeal of a good Communist emulation drive, the Mao cult in China is now bidding to surpass the highest stage reached in the worship of Stalin in the Soviet Union. Photographs, medallions, plaster busts, and paintings of a very young-looking Mao Tse-tung (he will be 67 years old this year), flood the Chinese markets and state stores.

The Image of All-Power

ALTHOUGH the members of the Chinese Communist armed forces returned to an intense study of Mao's works on guerrilla warfare and strategy in 1958, Mao's acknowledged rôle as a military leader and his political acumen which has been equally recognised in China, have not been extensively played up. Instead, a major goal of the new campaign of worship of Mao is to emphasise his qualities as a human being. A typical sentence from one of the reports on the Chairman's many tours of his domain in the last two years reads: "He entered the door smiling and looked at the people gathered in the room with an affectionate and kindly gaze." As in the case of the build-up for the "beloved Stalin," Mao is presented as deeply interested in children who are reported to flock around him in adoration. The adjectives used over and over to describe Chairman Mao are: modest, gentle, kindly, simple, sincere, and warm.

Typical of the new approach to the portrayal of Chairman Mao is an article that appeared in the magazine *China Youth* of February 1st, 1959, by Kuo Chang, purportedly one of the guards stationed at Mao's residence in Peiping. He describes his impressions when he was first assigned to his guard duty two years before:

> When I arrived in Peiping, I saw the heads of our Party Central Committee living very simply; Chairman Mao especially, was very spartan. He was living in an old state library, with a few one-storey buildings around the courtyard, a large fir tree in the centre, and four pots of chrysanthemums under the eaves. The door-screen for protection against the sun was made of reeds, and the appointments within were very simple. Except for a bookcase full of books, a cot, a desk, and several chairs, there was nothing. Chairman Mao's clothes are simplicity itself. His silver-grey gown he has worn for several years, his shoes have lost their colour; even his swimsuit has been patched. His two daughters dress simply, like village maidens. But Chairman Mao overlooks nothing in his concern for our welfare. He is interested in our being warm; he denies himself the old folks' fruit and tea which are given him, but gives them in turn to us. These unceremonious habits of our leaders have deeply impressed me, so that whenever I am concerned about personal enjoyment, I think of these, our leaders, how they work night and day for our nation and people, but as to personal enjoyment, are like ordinary labourers. These simple habits of living are forever a glorious example to us.

In a similar vein, Hsü Te-li, an old teacher and respected colleague from Hunan made a statement about Chairman Mao for the magazine *Workers of China* of April 27th, 1959. According to Hsü, Mao's life is very simple and thrifty: "Sometimes others mention that he is not having good food, and he will say, 'We Communists are like this. We should bear difficulties first, and seek enjoyment later. What others cannot do we must do.'"

Mao is portrayed as easily approachable, and, more important, his words are reported as always evoking response and inspiration among his listeners. "Chairman Mao's thinking and wisdom give the people inexhaustible strength," reported the *People's Daily* in referring to his visit in Tientsin from August 10th to 13th, 1958. The visit was described as "a great honour to the people of Tientsin." In Mao's meetings with them the people are described in terms of hearts pounding with joy and "so excited that tears drop from their eyes." An example of the type of material produced in the attempt to bring the Mao cult to all groups in China is an account, appearing in the physical culture magazine *T'i-yü Pao* of October 6th, 1958, of the Chairman's meeting with some swimmers. The swimmers admired Mao's prowess, and he gave them a few pointers such as the value of swimming in rivers where it is possible to learn to brave adverse currents. The author recounts, "when the Chairman learned that they had all taken specialised courses, he gave them this piece of advice: 'You have acquired good skills, but you will have to keep it up and do a good job of your work!' What an intimate and warm exhortation!" It is worth noting that the concentration on the personal attractiveness and simple existence of Mao (there is similar material on some of the other top leaders such as Liu Shao-ch'i) followed closely the "Hundred Flowers" period in mid-1957 when there were charges of walls being erected between the leadership and the people, of high living in top party circles, and of the top leadership acting as arbitrary gods rather than mortals.

In addition to the recently emphasised human qualities and approachability, Mao continues to

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be portrayed as before as the font of all wisdom. According to the Peiping *Daily Worker* of January 15th, 1959, "The great wisdom of our beloved leader Chairman Mao, and his talent, were acquired bit by bit in the mass revolutionary struggles and the immutable habit of studying hard." The Chairman has apparently given inspiring instructions in every conceivable field, from public sanitation to statistics, from traditional medicine to farming. In connection with his portrayed embodiment of Communism, Mao's infallibility and scientific knowledge of the future have also been stressed repeatedly in the newly-intensified cult of the individual. On the ninth anniversary of the régime, October 1st, 1958, the *People's Daily* pointed out, "To-day in the era of Mao Tse-tung, heaven is here on earth. Once the Party calls, tens of millions of the masses jump into action. Chairman Mao is a great prophet. Through scientific Marxism-Leninism he can see the future. Each prophecy of Chairman Mao has become a reality. It was so in the past; it is so to-day."

Every issue of every publication in China to-day joins in the task of praising Chairman Mao. According to a selection published in a collection entitled *Hungqi Folk Songs* in November 1959, the task will never be completed:

Chairman Mao is infinitely kind
Ten thousand songs are not enough to praise him
With trees as pens, the sky as paper
And an ocean of ink,
Much would still be left unwritten.

Some Realities

It is, of course, difficult to penetrate beneath the façade of the synthetic image of Mao Tse-tung presented officially in Communist China and to the world to-day. But it should surprise no one familiar with the example of Stalin in the Soviet Union to learn that in reality Mao bears little resemblance to the character portrayed, especially in the more recent campaign devoted to the leader's personal life and popularity with the Chinese people. There are several types of sources which can be of assistance in an attempt to discover the reality. First, the observations of former colleagues and refugees from Communist China who have seen Mao in action can prove of great value. These include, for example, accounts by the former Politburo-member Chang Kuo-t'ao whom I have personally interviewed, and by Chou Ching-wen, former Assistant Secretary-General of the China Democratic League, one of the minor political parties in the nominal coalition government set up by the Chinese Communists when they came to power. Chou's 588-page book *Ten Years of Violent Storm* (*Feng-pao Shih Nien*), published in Hong Kong in 1959, caused quite a stir in Chinese-reading circles. It contained an account of personal experiences with Mao and other top Communists during the first seven years of the régime. A second source is outside visitors and correspondents such as the group that accompanied Clement Attlee on his visit to the Chinese mainland in 1955. Another source is the actual photographs distributed by the Communists. These show, for example, a balding Mao far older in appearance than the portraits distributed for liturgical purposes. A fourth source lies in the criticisms made by those who have been denounced or purged. These include the remarks of such people as Hu Feng whose private letters were published in the *People's Daily* as a part of a nation-wide campaign against him in 1955. They include the remarks certain "rightists" were condemned for having made during the "Hundred Flowers" period of 1957.

Other clues to the real nature of Chairman Mao are more indirect and must be approached with special caution. As was the case with the cult of Stalin, the sheer intensity of effort by the Party propaganda network on certain items can frequently be an indication that the opposite is the case. This would apply, for instance, to the presentation of Chairman Mao as humble and easily approachable. Again there are the writings of Chairman Mao himself. These display a far more limited knowledge and a narrower intellectual approach to problems than the chorus of praise in China indicates. It may even be that more intellectual versatility is required to make Mao's writings seem profound than went into their original composition. In a dispatch of July 23rd, 1957, dealing with "rightist" Yen Wen-chieh who had spoken up during the "Hundred Flowers" period, the New China News Agency (NCNA) stated:

> Concerning the interpretation of articles written by the leader (Mao Tse-tung), he declared maliciously: "It looks as if an article is enough to solve all the theories and work problems in the world. It looks as if there is no other learning in the world to-day save this article. I really don't know why this is necessary. If the things written by a man have to be explained in numerous ways before they can be understood by other people, we can very well go without them."

Finally, there is the historical background and Mao's relation to the course of events in China.

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The cult of Mao itself, for instance, employs much the same language and exaggeration once used to describe the Chinese emperors as the paragons of virtue and first scholars of the land in Confucian China. The Japanese reporter, Kinno, writing in the Tokyo *Mainichi* (December 4th, 1959) after a forty-five day tour of mainland China, noted this parallel and remarked of Mao, "His portrait is, so to speak, an 'Imperial portrait' in Communist China."

WHAT sort of a person is the real Mao Tse-tung as revealed through these unofficial sources? Certainly they all agree that Mao is indeed a leader of real ability with a resolute determination and real capacity for flexibility as called for by opportunity. Although Mao has shown a remarkable ability to change course in pursuit of power, his former colleagues, and those who have watched him at close range, warn that there is little flexibility with regard to his determination to build and consolidate his personal power and that of the Communist Party in China. Chang Kuo-t'ao states that Mao understands power better than theory and that in its pursuit he has proved a "calculating and practical Chinese schemer." The Communist leader's power has grown steadily since his ragged forces, at lowest ebb, reached Shensi province following the Long March at the end of 1935. Mao's supremacy in China through his position as Chairman of the largest Communist Party in the world (13,960,000 members at the time of the tenth anniversary of the régime) is unchallenged.

A quarter-of-a-century of growth of power and success in bending Chinese masses to his will have served to convince Mao that his views are practically universal truths. Former colleagues noted that as his power grew in Yenan, Mao became increasingly dictatorial, always insisting on military-type discipline and loyalty, willing to indulge in violence, and capable of violent outbursts of rage. Recent research indicates that he was already indulging in an "Operation Rewrite" to prove himself infallible when he gave his autobiography to the American correspondent Edgar Snow in 1937. NCNA reported on July 14th, 1957, that the "rightist" Ch'en Ming-shu had described Mao as "hot-tempered, and not sober-minded; impetuous, and not prudent; reckless, and not self-assured; inquisitive, but not thoughtful from an overall point of view." He is capable of lapsing into peasant slang and the most earthy coolie profanity of his native Hunan province. Those who, like Chou Ching-wen, have watched him at close range have noted that with each passing year the Chairman's rage has grown more terrifying when someone crosses him or seems to disagree with views he holds firmly. This is not unexpected; it has been characteristic of many despots with long tenure in power.

MAO has been sufficiently astute to realise the importance of keeping himself and his central position always in focus. For example, the pictures taken at such gatherings as the First Session of the Second National People's Congress in April 1959, show Mao attired in a Party uniform much lighter in colour than those of his high-ranking colleagues. It will be recalled that at the beginning of World War II, when Hitler put on his uniform to be worn until the victory was won, it was of a much lighter shade so as to insure that he stood out in a picture or a gathering. Recent pictures of Chairman Mao, incidentally, do not bear out the current descriptions of his spartan life. Side-views reveal the Chairman's remarkably increased girth and the many photographs of feasts laid before him at banquet tables hardly confirm Hsü Te-li's article telling the Chinese workers Mao does not have good food. Numerous critics during the "Hundred Flowers" period accused the high-ranking Party members of ostentatious living. NCNA reported on July 29th, 1957, that Tai Huang, one of its own staff, had accused them of acting as a "special privileged class" that must be done away with. Outside readers were reminded of the description of "the New Class" by Milovan Djilas. Mao's increasing portliness and memories by former colleagues that he frequently lacked physical stamina and was incapable of prolonged exertion raise serious doubts about some of the physical feats attributed to him in 1958 and 1959.

Though few of Mao's critics deny his brilliance in some fields such as guerrilla tactics and techniques of mass control, they do point out some serious shortcomings. Chang Kuo-t'ao asserts that Mao is actually a poor administrator with a small capacity for detail and a rather bad memory for names. Others, including Indian Prime Minister Nehru, have noted his limited knowledge, especially of the outside world. Members of the Attlee mission in 1955 found him embarrassingly ill-informed about Europe and its history. For example, he confused the Scandinavian countries with Belgium and

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asserted that they had colonies in Africa. Chang Kuo-t'ao and others feel that Mao has little scientific knowledge and is poor at elementary arithmetic, yet the Communist leader frequently gives his own orders to the technical ministries. Hsüeh Mu-ch'iao, for example, relayed specific instructions and criticisms from Chairman Mao to a February 26th, 1958, meeting of the State Statistical Bureau. The Canadian journalist, William Stevenson, with three years' experience in Communist China, points out in his *The Yellow Wind* (published in 1959) Mao's tendency to over-simplify on the basis of piecemeal knowledge. He feels that Mao has "little scientific knowledge of the modern world," and dubs Chairman Mao "The Great Simplifier."

Mao's ability to sloganise and reduce complex matters to simple formulas has been one of his key assets. Communism's own over-simplified version of history and the world makes it a natural framework for the exploitation of this skill. Mao has frequently come up with the catchy slogan necessary to accommodate his policies or those of his régime to a changed set of circumstances. Sometimes, however, his formulations bear little relation to reality, and then, given the authority with which his power endows them, it is reality that must be made to conform to the slogans.

MANY of China's scholars and intellectuals are too sophisticated to accept Mao's simplifications, and although great numbers of them welcomed the Communists in 1949, the honeymoon period was a short one. In a land where scholarship has traditionally been so esteemed great effort has been made to present Chairman Mao as an intellectual in the Chinese pattern. Thus, although Mao himself deprecates the classical literature, he saw fit to publish eighteen of his own classical-style poems in January 1957. But he has failed to win the respect of the intellectuals. Chou Ching-wen's book reveals increasing contempt on the part of the intellectuals for Mao. The new attempts almost every year to regiment China's intellectuals and elicit their praise for "the Thought of Mao Tse-tung" are in themselves an indication of Mao's lack of rapport with them.

At the time of the Party Rectification campaign carried on during World War II, Mao delivered talks on literature and art to a forum in Yenan in 1942, in the course of which he laid down the doctrinal line intended to inspire the new literature for China. As was the case when Stalin attempted to direct the course of literature in the Soviet Union, Mao's dogmatic formulas have practically ensured that not a single first-class literary production would be forthcoming. Loyal Communist authors such as the famous female novelist, Ting Ling, have been purged.

In 1952, on the tenth anniversary of the Yenan talks, one of the writers directed to produce a commemorative piece was Hu Feng, a Communist and a disciple of Mao's favourite modern literary figure Lu Hsun. In a letter to a friend, which was ferreted out and published in the *People's Daily* during the 1955 campaign against him, Hu Feng wrote:

> I have tried to gather material to support Mao's Yenan address. But I have subsequently ceased doing so, for some people raised objections. Before I started, I felt disgust at the work. After I had set to work, I could not help crying. How came there to be such an imbecile, such a rotten beast? . . . Basically, Mao does not understand Lu Hsun at all. Mao's address is essentially not realism. I now feel it won't do. Under present circumstances, it is liable to kill the people.

Small wonder the campaign against Hu Feng was carried on with such vigour. His public writings on Mao were, to say the least, different in tone, as, for example, the following lines from one of his poems:

Mao Tse-tung
Standing erect on the mountain's topmost peak
Looks like one turning to himself
And to the world, announcing: . . .

High over on the sea
Would I be magnified—
Magnified that I may be able to embrace the whole world—
Magnified that I may be able to flow into eternity.

Hu Feng could legitimately be accused of insincerity, but this is a necessary virtue where the cult of an individual is in full force. After all, Khrushchev himself had been among the most fulsome in his tributes to the "great Stalin."

MAO'S own admiration for Stalin is not without significance, and his silence on the qualifications of Premier Khrushchev has been most eloquent. Chou Ching-wen entitled one chapter of his *Ten Years of Violent Storm*, "China's Stalin—Mao Tse-tung." In it he points out that while Mao told the Chinese they should take the Soviet Union as a teacher, the Chinese leader took Stalin as his teacher, especially with regard to the "cult of the individual." Unlike other Communist parties, especially those in

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Eastern Europe, the Chinese Communist Party under Mao has not down-graded Stalin nearly as much. In fact, in 1959, Mao was definitely out of step with Moscow on the issue of Stalin. The August 31st, 1959, issue of the *China Youth Daily*, for example, produced selections from Stalin for study by its readers. On the 80th anniversary of Stalin's birth, December 21st, 1959, the *People's Daily* carried a laudatory essay by Ai Ssu-ch'i, one of the top Chinese Communist philosophers. It was far out of tune with Moscow's own comments on the occasion.

With each passing year, the ageing Mao has displayed more of those characteristics for which Khrushchev denounced Stalin and which have been associated with other despots affected by their own power. Mao's conduct of Party and state affairs has been highly arbitrary and irregular. Politburo and Central Committee meetings are, as in the Soviet Union, convened secretly; sometimes decisions are announced as Mao's, sometimes as those of the Central Committee. Frequently the state structure is by-passed altogether. In the wake of Khrushchev's secret speech, for example, Mao called a special enlarged meeting of the Politburo in April 1956, to which he delivered a speech which was published in revised form only after two years. Mao's directives at that time formed the basis for Liu Shao-ch'i's report to the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, but this fact was not revealed until Liu's speech to the Second Session of the Congress in May 1958. Like Stalin, Mao leads an irregular life, sometimes working late into the night and sleeping in the morning, making demands on his colleagues at strange hours.

PROBABLY the factor of most importance in understanding the reality behind the myth of Mao Tse-tung to-day is the impact power and the cult of the individual have had on the man himself during the last ten years of growing control over the Chinese masses. The Hunanese peasant has been surrounded with increasing grandeur and pomp. The mammoth parades staged before him as he stands in the central position on the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Peiping amidst visiting foreign dignitaries are calculated to convince him as well as others of his greatness. Chang Kuo-t'ao reports that even in the Yenan days, Mao had tremendous conceit. Mao's successes since then have obviously not diminished his self-esteem. The Chairman is reported as being an avid reader of the *People's Daily* which contains most of the outstanding pieces in his praise. During the "Hundred Flowers" period he was criticised for surrounding himself with only those who pleased him. One of Mao's greatest flatterers, frequently photographed with him, is Kuo Mo-jo, who has called Mao the "sun of the human race." Kuo is given important international assignments and has been made head of the Academy of Sciences. Madame Sun Yat-sen, who, like Kuo Mo-jo, was one of Stalin's most eloquent admirers in China, is another of Mao's important non-Party flatterers. She has been made one of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Peiping régime.

The eroding influence of the cult built around him and Mao's own growing conceit are seen in his increasing intolerance of any criticism or questioning of his views. This is in turn reflected in the extreme sensitivity of his régime to any uncomplimentary remarks or actions outside of China. Chou Ching-wen tells of being present at a meeting in the Huai-jen Hall in Peiping in the summer of 1953 when Liang Shu-ming, a member of the Democratic League and one of China's leaders in rural reform, spoke of the comparatively heavy burden of the peasants compared with the workers in China. Mao seemed displeased. Following an intermission, Chou En-lai began to abuse Liang who had apparently touched on a field where Mao felt himself alone qualified to speak. Liang asked Mao for permission to speak for ten more minutes. Chou Ching-wen's account of the incident continues:

> He had barely spoken a few words when Mao Tse-tung could no longer control himself. Placing a microphone before him, Mao proceeded to engage in a verbal battle with Liang.
>
> Mao said: "You may think yourself very pretty, prettier than such famed beauties as Hsi Shih and Yang Kuei-fei. But I think you are a skunk."
>
> Liang was dumbfounded. He could not continue his speech. At the same time the atmosphere in the assembly became more tense.
>
> Pointing at Liang, Mao continued: "The Taiwan Radio praised you as a man of integrity and determination. I think you smell rotten, rotten to the very core of your bones."
>
> Standing at the rostrum, Liang looked as if lightning had just struck without any warning. He could not understand what had made Chairman Mao so very angry. He made a gesture to continue his speech; but now roars from the audience overtook him.

It is not surprising that a nation-wide campaign against Liang Shu-ming as an "enemy of the people" was subsequently launched. The "right-

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ists" who, following the "Hundred Flowers" period, were punished most severely or denounced most vehemently were those whose criticisms had included mention of Chairman Mao or had been directed against policies with which he was most intimately associated. Once Tito's Yugoslavia had questioned the wisdom of Mao and some of his policies, the Chinese Communists far surpassed their Soviet colleagues in a campaign of vituperation against that country's leadership. It is worth noting that in the spring of 1959 following reports that tomatoes had been hurled at Mao's portrait in India and the publication in Indian newspapers of cartoons considered highly insulting to the Chinese leader, Peiping's denunciation of the Indian "expansionists" was stepped up appreciably. The New China News Agency reported that the Chinese people's "wrath has flared up like wildfire."

The director of the Union Research Institute in Hong Kong, a competent and reputable organisation that follows developments on the Chinese mainland, reported on December 23rd, 1959, that "In spite of the fact that people are bored with the continued worshipping of Mao, particularly after the establishment of the 'people's communes,' yet the old man's conceit and the leader cult still grow." Former colleagues list as another example of Mao's conceit his calling of frequent conferences at which he talks for hours at a time. They point out that Mao is ill at ease when standing before a large gathering, but that when seated at a conference table where he can chain-smoke, he will rattle on interminably. After Mao became Chairman of the People's Republic in September 1954, he called sixteen meetings of the Supreme State Conference, an ill-defined body whose make-up is, according to the Constitution, at the discretion of the Chairman. At these meetings Chairman Mao was usually reported to have given "an incisive analysis of the domestic and international situation." Chou Ching-wen tells of attending one such meeting in the fall of 1956 when Mao rambled on for more than four hours. Despite his stepping down from his formal state position in 1959, Mao still calls meetings that include non-Party intellectuals and lectures to them. NCNA reported, for example, that on September 15th, 1959, Mao called a meeting and "made an important statement."

Mao's apparent dislike for addressing large formal gatherings and the great demands on his time and energy in connection with constant minor ceremonies he probably regarded as unworthy of his greatness may help to explain his 1959 decision to devote his full attention to ideology and Party affairs. Those who are increasingly enamoured of their own words and wisdom usually give less attention to the organisation and logical presentation of their remarks. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of Mao's recent rambling speeches have not been reproduced and others have been printed only after laborious editing sometimes more than a year later. Evidently the Chinese leader is more coherent on some days than on others. There were reports that much of Mao's lengthy speech at the meeting of the Communist Party leaders during the fortieth anniversary celebrations in Moscow in 1957 was highly incoherent and could not be understood by any of his listeners. Refugee Chinese intellectuals state that Mao's lengthy ramblings at the conferences he calls have tended to become more disjointed.

In his 1956 secret speech Khrushchev described a Stalin corrupted and made sick by his own power and vanity, "a distrustful man, sickly suspicious." Behind the façade an artificial image created by the cult of Mao a reality emerges from recent sources and from an analysis of the course of developments in China bearing too close a resemblance to Stalin for anyone's comfort. The Canadian Stevenson feels that Mao's speech on "contradictions," published for the first time on June 18th, 1957, "reveals a man feeding upon his own suspicions, convinced that he can correctly distinguish between good and evil, and determined to protect The People against wicked plots." Chou Ching-wen states his conclusion rather more bluntly: "The cult of the individual deranged Stalin, in China it has deranged Mao Tse-tung." Among many of his former Chinese associates Mao Tse-tung is described as "more Stalinist than Stalin."

Mao's career has many instructive parallels in Chinese history. The First Ch'in Emperor, to name one, united China for the first time in 221 B.C. He achieved this feat after fighting for more than twenty-five years subsequent to becoming head of his state in 247 B.C. His name is a synonym for despotic oppression and known to all Chinese. Historians have described his trends towards suspicion and abnormality after the ultimate victory. His military unification of China, following centuries of warfare and disorder, seemed to him and to his supporters practically superhuman. It was he who burned books and executed scholars who disagreed with his

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policies; he erected tablets and monuments to his own memory and constructed that greatest of all monuments to despotism, the Great Wall. This strange and awe-inspiring emperor, surrounded by flatterers, was almost completely given to his megalomania when death seized him in the eleventh year of his reign. Again, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, leader of the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), which Mao considers a forerunner of his régime, began to exhibit serious mental incompetence after he had proclaimed himself Heavenly King.

Certainly there is reason for Mao Tse-tung, a Hunan peasant who had never been outside his country before he came to power, to be impressed with some of the wonders modern science has been able to achieve in a China that has been unified and pacified under his rule. But it is also possible that he accepts his followers' claims that developments in China are due to his wisdom, that his words are inspired and sacred. As the editor of the Hong Kong *China News Analysis* points out:

> It is not unheard of in history that an absolute ruler should get mentally lost in the maze of his own glory and power and begin to show megalomaniac ideas, demanding the impossible, destroying enemies and supposed enemies mercilessly, recognising one mind and one will only—his own.

Some Implications

GIVEN the mental illness and breakdown that has so often accompanied totalitarian power, one obvious implication of the now full-blown cult of Mao Tse-tung is that his colleagues and people, his allies, and the whole outside world must contemplate dealing with a man who has been rendered mentally incapable of balanced judgment. Many of the recent Chinese policies and programmes make sense only when viewed within the framework of Mao's limitations. The Chinese leader, like ambitious emperors before him, is convinced on the basis of his experience and by some of the vast labour projects that his régime has carried out, that if the masses are mobilised, anything can be accomplished. NCNA reported on September 30th, 1959, that having witnessed the "tremendous energy of the masses" during an inspection trip of the provinces along the Yangtze, Chairman Mao stated his conviction, "All tasks can be accomplished on this foundation."

Mao's faith in the simple formula of mobilising the masses helps to explain the backyard iron furnaces and the organisation of the people's communes during the year of the "Great Leap Forward," 1958. Chairman Mao was given credit for inventing the primitive method of producing iron. Although this project proved to be a prodigious and heart-rending waste of labour and materials and the régime was compelled to acknowledge in August 1959, that most of the iron thus produced was of little value, Mao's infallibility had to be maintained. His critics were denounced as "right opportunists," and in October that year Chou En-lai stated that the small blast furnaces would be continued. The same faith that regimentation could accomplish anything was undoubtedly a major reason behind the organisation of the people's communes which Khrushchev is reported to have labelled "reactionary." With regard to these two mass movements carried on at the behest of Chairman Mao, one veteran diplomat is quoted as saying, "I feel someone has got into the national control cabin and is madly pulling all the levers."

The supreme self-assurance and the ambitions of the Chinese despot who has become convinced that he can do no wrong and that his slogans are universally applicable truths may also explain some of his difficulties with his Soviet allies. The Canadian reporter Gerald Clark who was in China in 1958 states that in their conversations with diplomats the Russians "give the impression that they do not understand Chinese moves any more than do non-Communists." Mao has, for example, attempted repeatedly to restore tough Stalin-type discipline to the international Communist movement. At the time of the fortieth anniversary celebrations in Moscow, Mao's insistence on strengthening the declaration of the Communist countries by the reaffirmation of subordination to Moscow prevented Yugoslavia from signing, although Tito's Party had agreed to an earlier milder statement proposed by Moscow. Mao was reported enraged almost to the point of hysteria, insisting that the Yugoslav comrades had to sign the declaration. Since that time, the Chinese Communist Party has stepped up its activities among Communist parties in underdeveloped areas, sometimes to the embarrassment of their Soviet allies.

Mao's conceit and sense of mission is also linked with nationalistic pride as ruler of China. Just as representatives of the Chinese emperors

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formerly concealed unpleasant facts in their reports to the throne, it is possible that Mao was not informed of the hostility of the Tibetans to his rule and actually believed that they welcomed his "liberation" and guidance. But once his rule was challenged in an area of traditional Chinese suzerainty, the imperial wrath was great, and any outside interest in the fate of the Tibetans was vigorously denounced. Mao's vanity and sense of destiny for China and the parallel with Stalin's ambitions for "holy Russia" are bound to cause some worry. The Indian demographer Sripati Chandrasekhar, for instance, noted with worry in one of his articles:

> But Chairman Mao Tse-tung, writing some twenty years ago (1939), pointed out: "In defeating China in war, the imperialist powers have taken away many Chinese dependent states and a part of her territories. Japan took Korea, Taiwan and the Ryu-kyu Islands, the Pescadores, Port Arthur; England seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, and Hong Kong; France occupied Annam and even an insignificant country like Portugal took Macao.

Such writings by Mao and their elevation to canonical status with memorisation and constant quotation also pose problems for his colleagues in China and for the outside world. Chinese leaders can hardly, while Mao is alive and the object of such adulation, advocate policies which are heretical. On the matter of the Chinese population problem, Chairman Mao has repeatedly asserted that "a large population is a good thing." In the rough and tumble rivalries of a totalitarian régime such statements will naturally be used against rivals who attempt to ignore them. Again, Mao's enmity for the West and especially for the United States has been long-enduring; he has denounced the Western "imperialists" as "paper tigers," not to be feared. It is difficult, therefore, either for Mao's ally Khrushchev or his better-educated comrades to advocate compromise over outstanding issues because of the formidable nature of United States power, especially in view of the fact that Mao has stated there can be no compromise with "imperialists."

As CHINA's modern unifier convinced he has the only truth for China, Mao is bound to be deeply sensitive and emotional to the point of fixation about the continued existence of his arch-rival Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan. The continued existence of the Republic of China on Taiwan constitutes a challenge to the whole structure of the Mao cult just as surely as Trotsky while he was alive remained a challenge to Stalin. It is possible that Khrushchev, aware that the United States is not a "paper tiger" and is firmly committed to the defence of Taiwan, has had to restrain the infallible Mao on more than one occasion. Chinese refugee leaders in Hong Kong did not miss the Chinese implications of Khrushchev's constant stress during his United States tour of the necessity to accept the *status quo* and statements about "two Germanys" having to be accepted because they have been in existence for ten years. As a Chinese national leader, Mao was bound to be jealous, and as an infallible despot bound to be suspicious of what was said at Camp David. Mao's simplified two-camp view of the world probably led him to believe that Khrushchev was a deviationist and that his own rôle in the service of Marxist purity was now even more important than ever. Mao's régime has remained out of tune with Moscow. While the latter looked with some favour on President Eisenhower's trip to many countries, including India at the close of 1959, Peiping denounced it as a "plot to aggravate tension."

Most of the implications of the cult of Mao Tse-tung are only too clear on the basis of the world's experience with Stalin, but one final one deserves attention. As Chang Kuo-t'ao points out, Mao "is a 'military first' man." His career and power have been built primarily by military means. The Long March and subsequent long years of war reinforced his sense of destiny and conviction that the representatives of the outworn "bourgeois and feudal classes" are "paper tigers" without the will to fight. More than half his top associates are military men who share Mao's conviction that the "central task and highest form of revolution is to seize political power by force, to solve problems by war." Though others prefer to talk of American policy, corruption, or social ills in China, Mao himself attributes his victory over the Nationalists to military skill and the mobilisation of the masses.

The Chinese leader has restored armed violence to Marxism with all its original crudeness. According to Peiping in May 1958, the military writings of Chairman Mao were made part of the regular curriculum of the national military academy for the first time. The Chairman's military writings have been proclaimed the basis for the future development of Chinese Communist armed forces; they stress the relation

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of war and politics. In his *Problems of War and Strategy*, Mao wrote:

> Every Communist must grasp the truth: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun will never be allowed to command the Party.... we can even say that the whole world can be re-moulded only with the gun. As we are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not desire war; but war can only be abolished through war—in order to get rid of the gun, we must first grasp it in our hand.

Mao's militaristic bent and belief in the value of war for the attainment of Communist goals must stir serious misgivings among Soviet leaders. This may help to explain recent caution in Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists and Moscow's failure to provide Mao with missiles and atomic weapons.

The cult of the leader built around Mao Tse-tung, the great simplifier, is too portentous to be passed over by any of the world's leaders, or by his more knowledgeable and balanced Chinese colleagues. It is possible that his increasing physical and mental infirmity may facilitate his being eased to one side, but unfortunately under the cult of the individual contests for power are usually decided in terms of who supports and pleases the leader most. The world is thus faced with a rapidly industrialising and increasingly powerful China directed by an inadequately informed and little-travelled despot who has long had a conviction of destiny and infallibility and whose cult may well drive him to an extreme megalomania. This prospect probably causes greatest consternation among the Soviet colleagues whose ideology Mao Tse-tung claims to represent. They undoubtedly prefer to have their Hunanese peasant standard-bearer armed with a hoe rather than an atom bomb.

"Guido, I' Vorrei . . ."

If we could only get hold of a ship, Guido—
You and I, and Lapo— and if the wind
Were pliant to our wishes (we'd have a wand!)—
Then we could just pack in everything and go.
And without worrying about storms, or snow,
Or other sea-borne catastrophes, like fire;
But, living perpetually in the one desire
To stick close to each other, the desire would grow.

Finally we'd use the wand to bring on board
The ladies Vanna and Lagia, and the one
Who generally can be found at Number Thirty.
And if they showed the least signs of being bored
We'd argue about love all day, then give them reason
For being as happy as I know we'd be.

Michael Fried

From the Italian of Dante

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Weizmann

A Lecture at Rehovoth — By R. H. S. Crossman

By what right do I, an English Gentile, claim to talk about Weizmann's Zionist faith? My answer is that, in the course of this century, the history of Great Britain and of the Jewish people has been tragically yet providentially intertwined—and the man chiefly responsible for this was Chaim Weizmann. As for myself, I can claim expert knowledge neither of Zionism nor of the Middle East. My mind was empty, if not open, when I was pitched into the Palestine problem by Ernest Bevin's decision to appoint me, in the autumn of 1945, one of the two British M.P.s on the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry. Since Mr. Bevin was a careful man and was hopeful that this Commission's report would help his own plans for Palestine, it is not difficult to conclude that I started our 120-day investigation without any bias in favour of Zionism.

Looking back now, I can see that Mr. Bevin was playing for time; the main function of our Commission was to postpone for 120 days the very awkward decision that faced him. It was irritating to discover that I had taken part in a mere time-wasting operation, but I can be grateful to Ernest Bevin for two things. By sending me to Palestine, he made me first an observer and then a participant in the birth of a new nation, the most thrilling and probably the most useful episode in my political life. Secondly, it was he who unwittingly forged my only intimate friendship with a great statesman. It was thanks to Ernest Bevin that I came to know Chaim Weizmann during the last, most tragic, and yet grandest episode of his career.

When I consider the birth of Israel, therefore, my natural starting-point is the personality of Weizmann. I do not think of him as the first President of Israel—or, indeed, as an Israeli at all—but as the leader of international Jewry, the one great statesman thrown up by the Zionist movement since Herzl founded it. Unlike Moses, he died after he reached the Promised Land and his body lies here at Rehovoth. Yet spiritually he remained on Pisgah, the last of those who prophesied an Israel yet unborn.

In considering Weizmann's Zionism, it is natural for an Englishman to start with the letter he wrote as a boy of eleven to his schoolmaster in Pinsk. Before I visited the Weizmann Archives, I had read a translation of this letter, in which the text had been watered down at one vital point in order to soothe American susceptibilities. The more I study it, the more this letter fascinates me, and I spent a whole morning with the chief archivist, Mr. Boris Guriel, before we were able to agree that the following text, if inelegant, is reasonably accurate.

My teacher, my mentor, Schlomo Sokolovsky,

I am sending you one of my ideas so that you can see about the Society of lovers of Zion and Jerusalem. How great and lofty was the idea which inspired our brother Jews to found this Society! Through it we can save our downtrodden and despondent brethren who are scattered in all corners of the world and have no place in which to pitch their tents. We are being persecuted everywhere and the Jew is a burden on all people, and on all the kings of Europe generally and on the king of Russia in particular. Yet this may be the beginning of our redemption. We must therefore support this esteemed Society and we must thank all the supporters of this Society, such as Dr. Yassinovsky and Dr. Pinsker and all who rallied underneath the flag of this Society. But we must also thank two Jewish patriots, and they are Moshe Montefiore and Rothschild. Finally, we must thank this Society, because we are able to see what lies before us and the evil which threatens us. Therefore the obligation lies upon us to find some place of refuge. Because even in America, where knowledge prevails, they will persecute us and in all the countries of Africa and especially in the State

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> of Morocco they will persecute us and have no mercy upon us. So let us carry our banner to Zion. Let us return to our original mother, on whose knees we were reared. For why should we expect mercy from the kings of Europe, that they should, in their pity for us, give us a resting-place? In vain. All have decided that the Jew is doomed to death, but England will have mercy on us. Nonetheless, let us turn to Zion. Jews, to Zion let us go.
>
> From me, your pupil, *Chaim Weizmann.*

How did a boy of eleven, living in a remote village of the Pale, foresee all that? It is tempting for an Englishman to accept the letter as it stands, without seeking a rational explanation. Yet what looks like a miraculous prophecy is at least partially elucidated by a passage in Weizmann's autobiography, *Trial and Error*. In his first chapter, Weizmann describes his childhood at Motol, where his father was a *"transportierer,"* who cut and hauled the timber and got it floated down the Vistula to Danzig. Next door lived Grandfather, and when Weizmann was five he went to live with him and listened, rapt, to the old man's stories.

> I was particularly impressed by the visit of Sir Moses Montefiore to Russia—one of his innumerable journeys on behalf of his people. That particular visit had taken place only a generation or so before my birth, but the story was already a legend.
>
> Indeed, Sir Moses Montefiore was himself, though then still living, already a legend. He was to live on until 1885 to the fabulous age of one hundred and one years. On the occasion of which my grandfather used to tell me, Sir Moses came to Vilna, one of the oldest and most illustrious Jewish settlements in Russia, and the Jews came out to welcome him, unharnessed the horses and dragged the carriage of Sir Moses in solemn procession through the streets.

This passage seems to me to explain but not to explain away the prophecy contained in the letter. Already by the age of eleven, Weizmann's thinking and emotions had taken on the Zionist pattern which, when fully developed, enabled him to negotiate the Balfour Declaration. What we see here, in fact, is not so much a prophecy as a childish anticipation of the grown man's philosophy of life. Weizmann's Zionism was not rooted in Western, far less in British, ideas but in the life of the Russian Jews under Tsarist tyranny. Because, as a boy, he was at best a second-class citizen in the Russian State and at worst a victim of persecution, he grew up completely free from that double loyalty which so many of his Western Jewish contemporaries felt. A Jew forbidden to live outside the Pale and treated by the State as a foreign body could feel no Russian patriotism. His only patriotism was a purely Jewish patriotism, and the only country which he could call his own was the land to which, as he read every day in his Bible, the Jews were bound to return.

For a Jew growing up in Britain or America, Zionism is to-day a philanthropic cause. For the boy Weizmann at the end of the last century, it was the only hope. Already, writing to his schoolmaster, he could talk quite naturally about Palestine as his National Home. Already, seeing the weakness of his own people, he could conclude that the return to Zion would not take place without the assistance of a Great Power. But, with all the world, including the new power of America, apparently against them, what power would rescue the Jews? How natural that this little boy should think of the remote country from which Sir Moses Montefiore had come to relieve their distress! This is not the view of Great Britain which a boy brought up in an assimilated Western family would have obtained. The idea of an island of freedom and chivalry, far away in the Atlantic, is precisely the kind of romantic notion which lightened the darkness of the Jewish Pale.

SEVEN years later Weizmann made his first journey abroad. At the age of nineteen he found himself at the terrible school of Dr. Barness at Pfungstadt. He had already acquired the inner core of his Zionist outlook: all his political and spiritual aspirations were centred on a physical and actual return of the Jewish people to Zion and the creation of a Jewish national state in Palestine. In Germany, however, a new and important element was added. Weizmann arrived at Pfungstadt with a passion for Western science and a worship of Western freedom. Now this devotion to Western civilisation was to be counter-balanced by a hatred for the assimilated Jew and, in particular, for the wealthy, super-patriotic German Jew.

> Pfungstadt was my introduction to one of the queerest chapters in Jewish history: that of the assimilated Jews of Germany, then in the high summer of their illusory security, and mightily proud of it. . . . I remember how, shortly after my arrival, one of the teachers asked me what nationality I was; and when I answered, *"Ein Russischer Jude"* (a Russian Jew), he stared at me, then went off into gales of laughter. He had never heard of such a thing. A German, yes. A Russian, yes. Judaism, yes. But a Russian Jew! That was to him the height of the ridiculous. . . . Dr. Barness was completely assimilated, and described himself as "a German of the Mosaic persuasion." He took his Judaism to mean that in all respects save that of a religious ritual he was as German, in culture, background, and personality, as any descendant of the Cerusci. . . . Even Dr. Barness could not ignore the evidence

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> of Jew-hatred about him. But he regarded it as the result of a slight misunderstanding.
>
> If some Germans were anti-semitically inclined, it was because they did not know the sterling qualities of the Jews, as exemplified in Dr. Barness and his like. They had to be told—that was all. A little enlightenment, judiciously applied, and anti-semitism would simply vanish. With all my youthful naïvety I just could not stomach Dr. Barness' rather fatuous and self-satisfied philosophy of anti-semitism; and though it was shared by all the teachers in the school, I did not yet suspect that it was a characteristic of most of German Jewry. . . . At the time I only knew—when I began, with an increasing grasp of the language, to understand what he was talking about—that he caused me the acutest discomfort. Without a philosophy of history or of anti-semitism, I felt clearly enough that Dr. Barness was an intellectual coward and a toady.

There was nothing contradictory or inconsistent in combining a love of Western ideas with a contempt for Western assimilation. Anyone from Motol was bound to regard as a traitor the Frankfurter or Berliner who denied his Jewishness and sought to pretend that he was a German. What distinguished Weizmann from most of the other Russian Zionists was his recognition that to create a Jewish nation in Palestine would involve something more than transplanting the Jew from the Pale and planking him down in Palestine, with all his narrow orthodoxy and blinkered outlook. The new Jewish nation, in Weizmann's view, would combine all the vibrant Jewishness of family life in the Pale with the best of the scientific and democratic culture of the West. The aim of the true Zionist, therefore, must be not to assimilate himself to the Western democracies but to translate into Jewish national terms their science and their freedom.

The fact that Weizmann combined a love of Western civilisation with a hatred of assimilation explains one puzzling aspect of his character, which struck me on my first meeting with him in Rehovoth. I was confronted with a personality who combined the fanaticism and power of Lenin with the sophisticated charm of Disraeli. Even more puzzling, here was a Jew who obviously preferred the company of British Gentiles to that of assimilated Jews. As I got to know him, it became ever clearer that we English were regarded as *Goyim*, for whom allowances must be made, whereas he never forgave the shortcomings of the Jew—especially the German Jew—who should have known better. For, to Weizmann, every Jew was a potential Zionist, and those whose Jewish patriotism was qualified by any other national loyalty were to be pitied or despised. Certainly he was prepared to collect their money for the cause, but they could never earn his complete respect. Since very few Western Jews passed this test, it was natural enough that Weizmann should feel more at home with honest-to-God Englishmen, Americans, and Frenchmen.

THE structure of Weizmann's world outlook was completed at Geneva, where he taught chemistry and had his first clash with the kind of "progressive" thinkers who believe that the problem of anti-semitism can be disposed of by the bland assertion, "All men are brothers." This outlook was prevalent among the Russian students in Switzerland, most of whom were ardent members of the Social Democratic Party, then dominated by Lenin. One of the basic principles of Russian Social Democracy (and later of Russian Communism) was that there was no real difference between a black man and a white man or between a Jew and a Gentile. Such differences were part of the superstructure of bourgeois nationalism and would disappear after the revolution. In Germany, Weizmann had acquired a radical contempt for the rich Jews who sought to assimilate themselves to the Western Christian community. In Geneva, he acquired an equally radical contempt for the Jewish intellectuals, who denied their real Jewishness for the sake of an abstract theory of world revolution.

One of the stories which I made him repeat to me until I almost knew it by heart was the occasion at Berne when he challenged the Socialists who dominated the Russian student organisation to a debate on Zionism. In order to make sure of victory, these students had invited some of the most prominent Russian Social Democrats-in-exile to speak. So fierce was the struggle that it was protracted for three days and two nights on end, until the Marxists could bring up their reinforcements from Berlin. In speech after speech they proved conclusively that Zionism was a vulgar bourgeois heresy, incompatible with the principles of dialectical materialism, the doctrine of the class war, and the aim of the classless society.

Owing to the *numerus clausus* imposed in Russian universities, a very large number of the students present were Jews, compelled to come West in order to graduate. For them the topic of debate was not abstract theory but an *Existenzfrage*. Most of them were miserably poor, condemned to a life of second-class citizenship in a benighted and backward Tsarist Empire. All of them dreamed of a revolution, which would usher in a new world. But what kind of revolution? Should they put aside all differences of colour, race, and nationality and join the oppressed proletariat in a world revolu-

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tion? That was the tremendous future presented to them by Lenin and Plekhanov and Axelrod. Or should they follow this tall, unknown lecturer in chemistry, who coolly informed them that the world revolution was escapist nonsense; the only way a Jew could achieve his own or his people's freedom was by the return to Zion and the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish national state?

When the debate ended, no vote was taken, but on the next day Weizmann was able to found the first student Zionist organisation in Switzerland. Among those he had converted was a handsome girl from Rostov on Don, who was also studying medicine and whom he helped by translating lectures into Russian. Vera, who later became his wife, had been brought up outside the Pale as a Russian rather than a Jew. Whereas Chaim was born into Zionism, she was a Zionist by intellectual conversion, a brand saved from the fire of assimilation by her fiancé.

The years at Geneva were the period when Weizmann's philosophy (as distinct from his policies and programme) reached its full development. Nothing essential was added to it either when he settled in Britain or by his visits to Palestine. From now on he was a "concrete" revolutionary, set apart from the other Zionist politicians by his conscious dislike of what he contemptuously dismissed as "abstract internationalism"—under which he condemned not only Eastern Marxism but Western Liberalism as well. Both outlooks he regarded as vitiated by a refusal to face the basic fact on which Zionism is founded—the essential unassimilable Jewishness of the Jew and the hostility which this must arouse so long as the Jew lives in a foreign community.

Anti-semitism, he used to say to me, is a bacillus, which every Gentile carries with him, wherever he goes and however often he denies it. Like other bacilli, it may remain quiescent and harmless for years. But, once the right conditions are created, the bacilli multiply and the epidemic breaks out. The condition for an outbreak of overt anti-semitism in any nation is that the number of Jews should rise beyond the safety level of that particular nation. Hence the only radical cure for anti-semitism is the creation of the Jewish State. At our first meeting, which lasted most of the way through the night, Weizmann outlined this theory to me and asked me whether I was anti-semitic. When I said, "Of course," I felt that our friendship had begun. For, if a Gentile denied his latent anti-semitism, Weizmann concluded that he must either be lying or, even worse, deceiving himself. In his view the only honest attitude for a Gentile to adopt was to admit his unconscious prejudice against Jews and to ensure that it did not influence his behaviour by consciously making allowances for it.

BROWSING in the Rehovoth Archives, I have been more and more impressed by the radicalism of Weizmann's outlook. Gradually, since he had died and my memory of him had begun to fade, I had begun to absorb the view, preached by so many important people, that Weizmann was a bourgeois politician, who stood well Right-of-centre. There is some truth in this view, if we consider only his attitude to the British Empire. But this was not a central part of his philosophy, which remained rooted in the life of the Jewish masses, exiled from their homeland and deprived of their nationhood. Here Weizmann was a radical, since he saw clearly that the creation of a Jewish nation in Palestine would require a social revolution that would completely transform the urban, commercial way of life forced on the Jews of the Diaspora. He was always prepared to accept any social policies, however extreme, if they could be shown to assist the settlement of Jews in Palestine.

Another factor which strengthened the radicalism of his outlook was his rationalism and devotion to scientific method. Among a people which had only preserved its Jewishness by strict observance of religious traditions and religious ceremony, his rationalist contempt for every kind of superstition always struck me as very remarkable. At first I felt there was a contradiction between his delight in dancing the *Hora* and the delight he also took in baiting the Rabbis about *kosher* food. But later I came to realise the validity of his distinction between an ancient hygiene, now recognised as unscientific, and a dance, which, though it apparently derives from Eastern Europe, still perfectly expresses the Jewish national character. Scientific Zionism, in his view, requires that the former, which is nothing but a taboo, should be stripped by derision of the awe with which it is surrounded, whereas the other must be lovingly preserved.

Some writers have tried to separate Weizmann's science from his Zionism and to treat him as a man with two separate careers and life interests. Actually his devotion to science and to Zionism was a single passion, already fused during his period at Geneva into a single philosophy, which may be described either as scientific or as organic Zionism. I can best illustrate its main characteristic by describing the impression he made on me on the first occasion on which I met him face to face. It was in Jerusalem in 1946, when he gave his testimony before the Anglo-American Commission. One of the most controversial issues which our terms of reference

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required us to investigate was President Truman's suggestion that 100,000 survivors of the gas-chambers should immediately be granted certificates of entry into Palestine. One of my American colleagues—Frank Buxton—put the question to him. "Now, Dr. Weizmann, could you get the 100,000 in within twelve months?" I remember very distinctly what happened. Weizmann paused and thought. Then he said, "I'm not sure about twelve months, but certainly we could within one or two years." I can still see the fury and perturbation on the faces of the Zionist delegation sitting behind Weizmann. Here was their leader, showing doubt and hesitation, when he should have answered straightaway, "Of course. At once. In twelve months we can do it."

Yet, when the Commission met that evening in private, we discovered that the one fact that stuck out of all that day's testimony was this remark of Weizmann's. So far from weakening the Jewish position, it had impressed us all, because Weizmann was the first witness to show some scientific, objective doubt. Everyone else, Arab and Jew, had been cocksure and glib and, if they were uncertain of anything, felt a duty to suppress it. Only Weizmann was prepared to say, simply and openly, "I'm not quite sure." And this example of Weizmann's objectivity made us take the rest of his evidence, and that of the other Jews, far more seriously.

Listening to Weizmann that day made me think of Thomas Masaryk—another democratic revolutionary of the same generation and of the same calibre. He too combined what Weizmann used to describe as a "blinkered nationalism" with a scientific passion for truth. Indeed, he wrote a whole book in order to prove that the most popular nationalist Czechoslovak legend was based on a forgery. When some of his colleagues complained that he was destroying their propaganda, he replied, "Truth is the only propaganda I believe in." The authority of Chaim Weizmann as the leader of Jewry in exile was of the same kind as that of Thomas Masaryk in his struggle to liberate the Czechoslovak people. Both men were democratic revolutionaries, in the strict sense of both words. They had a simple faith that freedom, truth, equality, and liberty are ideals which can only be realised when a people is free to rule itself freely; and they believed this without the complications and reservations of our times. For in their view the truth and the good of the community were not merely compatible but essential to each other. It was this which made them both such balanced, serene personalities and enabled them to exert great authority over the movements they led without becoming autocrats or dictators.

So we come to the period which naturally interests me most—Weizmann's long sojourn in Britain. Whoever undertakes the official biography will have to hack his way through a jungle of legend before he writes these chapters. Working in unnatural alliance, many of Weizmann's British admirers and some of his bitterest Jewish enemies have combined to assert that, by living in Britain, he became an anglicised member of Anglo-Jewry, agonisingly divided between his prime loyalty to Jewry and his secondary loyalty to the country whose passport he was so proud to bear. I saw a good deal of Weizmann at a time when Anglo-Jewish relations were at their worst and it is my considered conclusion that this account of his relationship to Britain is based on a complete misunderstanding. It is true that, when he actually set foot in the country of which he had written so romantically at the age of eleven, Weizmann was not disappointed. If a Jew had to live as a foreigner among a strange people, then England was the best country of exile in the world. It is also true that he formed almost as strong a dislike for the wealthy, assimilated English Jews as he had for the German Jews, and treated them with a sardonic contempt, which he never displayed towards the English Gentile. What is not true is that he ever became sufficiently anglicised to feel that conflict of loyalty which so worried his anti-Zionist opponents among British Jewry.

Here again, as we saw in his schoolboy letter, the first beginnings foreshadowed clearly the shape of things to come. Before he finally settled in Manchester, Weizmann made a very brief visit to London. It occurred in 1904, the year after the sixth Congress, in which Theodor Herzl had read the famous letter from the British Government, signed by Lord Lansdowne, offering the Jews, as an alternative to Palestine, an autonomous territory in what was then Uganda and is now Kenya. No final decision was taken, but the Congress was terribly divided and Weizmann was among those who challenged the leadership as a *Neinsager*. It was in this capacity that he was sent to investigate the Uganda proposal.

There were two episodes in this brief visit characteristic of his whole future relationship with Britain. The first took place in the Foreign Office. Weizmann had been given a letter of introduction to Lord Percy (brother of Lord Eustace Percy), who was then in charge of African affairs.

> *Lord Percy was the first English statesman I met. He was a man in the middle thirties, with the finely chiselled features of his family, courteous and affable in manner, and obviously well informed. He asked me a great deal about*

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the Zionist movement, and expressed boundless astonishment that the Jews should ever so much as have considered the Uganda proposal, which he regarded as impractical on the one hand, and, on the other, a denial of the Jewish religion. Himself deeply religious, he was bewildered by the thought that Jews could even entertain the idea of any other country than Palestine as the centre of their revival, and he was delighted to hear from me that there were so many Jews who had categorically refused. He said: "If I were a Jew I would not give a halfpenny for this proposition!"

Weizmann's previous experience had been limited to Russian, German, and Swiss officialdom. He was surprised and captivated by Lord Percy's informality and candour. That an official representative of a Great Power, formally pledged to the Uganda policy, should advise him to turn it down seemed to him to prove that the spirit of old Sir Moses Montefiore was as strong as ever. This episode roused in him that fondness for the British ruling class which, in the case of Lord Balfour, was to develop into an exquisitely balanced personal friendship.

The second episode was a meeting with a very different kind of Englishman, Sir William Evans Gordon, M.P. This is how Weizmann described it.

Sir William Evans Gordon, father of the Aliens Bill, was generally regarded as responsible for all the difficulties placed in the way of Jewish immigrants into England. The Aliens Bill in England and the movement which grew up around it were natural phenomena, however, which might have been foreseen. They were a repetition of a phenomenon only too familiar in our history. Whenever the quantity of Jews in any country reaches saturation point, that country reacts against it. The reaction cannot be looked upon as anti-semitism in the ordinary or vulgar sense of that word; it is a universal social and economic concomitant of Jewish immigration, and we cannot shake it off. Sir William Evans Gordon had no particular anti-Jewish prejudices. I am fairly sure he would equally have opposed the mass influx of any other foreign element, but no other foreign element pressed for admission in such numbers. . . . Evans Gordon gave me some insight into the psychology of the settled citizen, and though my views of immigration were in sharp conflict with his, we discussed these problems in a quite objective way.

Such tolerance of a British "blimp" is all the more breathtaking against the following assessment of British Jewry.

Zionism in England reflected the general critical condition of the movement at its worst. At this time it was acquiring a peculiar savour; it tended to be transformed into a rather low-grade British patriotism—a British patriotism based on an imaginary attachment to an imaginary country which nobody had seen and nobody knew.

When the young Weizmann talked to Lord Percy and Sir William Evans Gordon, he knew not a word of English and was completely ignorant of the British way of life. Yet we can already observe, in his methods of handling these English gentlemen, the two qualities which were later to serve him so well in negotiating the Balfour Declaration. He always had the knack of being courteous without seeming obsequious and he was able to do this without play-acting precisely because he always felt himself to be representing Jewry to a strange people, whose help he needed and whose foibles he studied with a detached fascination.

In 1904 Dr. Weizmann and his young fiancée, after many doubts and hesitations, decided to settle in Britain. He arrived, as we have seen, with a deep suspicion of British Jewry and an almost dangerously open mind towards the rest of the British people. This open-mindedness made him an instantaneous success when he arrived in Manchester with an appointment as a lecturer in chemistry but still with no knowledge of English. And that success deepened when his wife, having qualified for the second time, and in yet another language, as a doctor, became a British Medical Officer of Health.

The mistake of most historians is hindsight—the interpretation of events in terms of a future unknown by the participants. How tempting it is, for example, to believe that one, at least, of Weizmann's motives in coming to England was an uncanny premonition that the British Government would one day hold the key to Palestine and that London, therefore, was where Zionism should make its headquarters! There is no evidence to support this view. The truth is that Weizmann went to Britain because Britain seemed to provide the best chance for him as an ambitious young chemist. Once he had settled in Manchester, he concentrated on his academic career and the famous talk with Balfour, which occurred during the 1906 general election, was an isolated incident. Balfour found it fascinating, but I very much doubt whether Weizmann, at the time, thought it would lead to anything important. So far from anticipating the conditions which would lead to the Balfour Declaration, we find him, on several occasions before 1914, considering the possibility of moving to Palestine—or even back to Germany. For though, in retrospect, he came to regard his time at Manchester University as a happy comradeship with Rutherford and Alexander, the realities were rather different. Despite his outstanding ability as a chemist, he was passed over by his Professor, who, in 1913, for reasons

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obviously tinged with anti-semitism, refused to support his undoubted claim to a Professorship. Weizmann was so downcast by this gross injustice that he seriously thought of going to Berlin, a decision from which he was only deflected by his wife, who blankly refused to give up her job as a Health Officer.

Nor is there any contemporary evidence to suggest that in this period he revealed the statesmanship he was later to show. Here, to remind us of the real man, is a passage from the recollections of Louis Lipsky, which describes him in 1913 at the Vienna Zionist Congress.

> Dr. Weizmann stood in the rear of the hall, where the caucuses were held, his eyes half closed, listening, rarely speaking. He was a shrewd debater, good at repartee, but there was no drive in him at Vienna. He seemed to be listening, to be waiting. There were no intimations of a coming world struggle. The first World War projected Dr. Weizmann into the political field. There was no formal decision. He was drawn into the place which the official leadership should have taken, but was unable, by reason of the war, to take. Dr. Weizmann realised that it was to this fateful moment that he had looked forward from his early days in Switzerland when he read Daniel Deronda, and so he became absorbed. The experience transformed him. He passed from the internal world of Zionism to the external world of politics. His public addresses in England now revealed a statesman's approach to the Jewish problem. He was conscious of the world platform on which he stood. He now began to speak as if the great Jewish past were using him as its medium. He had banished the trivial and held firmly to the eternal.

It was the first World War that made Weizmann great. For greatness, in a statesman, is not something intrinsic. To achieve it, a politician must have the good fortune to be presented with an opportunity which exactly matches all his qualities. Many could have become great if the opportunity had come their way; and there are even more nonentities who get the opportunity and fail. What made Weizmann great was that everything he had thought and done before World War I fitted him perfectly for the moment which no one, including himself, had anticipated. Viewed in retrospect, the story looks providential and Weizmann's conduct has an appearance of foresight and of calculating shrewdness. What foresight, for example, before the war broke out, to have proved himself a "good security risk" by quarrelling with the German Jews about the Haifa Technion! How shrewd, in 1914, to cut off all correspondence with the Zionists in Berlin, although Berlin was still the headquarters of world Zionism! In fact, of course, these actions were not calculated and showed no foresight. Weizmann's spontaneous display of anti-Germanism quite unwittingly enabled the British security authorities to clear him as a foreign resident who could be trusted to undertake secret work on explosives for the Admiralty, and so brought him into contact with Lloyd George. So, too, his hatred of Russian Tsarism, which, at the beginning of the war, was something of an embarrassment, helped him greatly at the time when the Balfour Declaration was being discussed. In 1917, after the Russian Revolution, British politicians were deeply impressed by the Russian Jew who for three years had told them they could not rely on the Tsar.

When the period of waiting was over, the opportunity came and fitted the man as closely as a glove. In 1917, owing to a completely unforeseen concatenation of circumstances, this second-rank Zionist politician was able to take over the leadership of world Zionism and make a pact with the British Empire for a National Home in Palestine. I am pretty sure that, when the appointment with destiny came, Chaim Weizmann had no doubts or uncertainties. Unlike Churchill, he had not foreseen, far less planned, his moment of greatness. But when it came, he accepted it with the same kind of quiet confidence that Sir Winston felt when, in 1940, he was made Prime Minister and slept quietly (as he tells us in his *War Memoirs*) for the first time in years.

WHAT were the motives that prompted the British Government to issue the Balfour Declaration? Weizmann himself has disposed of some of the sillier "explanations." The silliest, perhaps, is the theory that Lloyd George was the prime mover and did it mainly as a reward for Weizmann's services and in order to win over the American Jews. As Weizmann has pointed out, so far from winning them over, British support for Zionism alienated wealthy American Jewry, as it alienated wealthy British Jewry. It would be more sensible to suggest that the British Government was wooing the support of the Russian Jews at this critical period of the Russian Revolution! Another school of historians tells us that the real motives were strategic: the British Government needed a stronghold north of the Suez Canal from which to secure communications with India. Again, Weizmann has exploded this fallacy by reminding us that, up to the very last moment, the British Government was extremely reluctant to take over the Palestine Mandate. Some far-sighted officials may have seen the strategic advantages of the Declaration, but these advantages were not the motive that prompted it.

I have come to the conclusion that, as so often in politics, the most obvious explanation is the

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nearest to the truth. For slightly different reasons, Balfour, Lloyd George, and Milner all felt under an obligation, in the moment of Allied victory, to do something for oppressed Jewry. It was the achievement of Weizmann to convince them that the one thing worth doing and the one thing which, under his leadership, had now become practicable was the establishment of the National Home. Other motives—the strategic calculations, the influence on American Jewry, the effect on Russian Jewish morale—were, I believe, at most secondary factors.

WHEN he was persuading Balfour, Lloyd George, and Milner to take this momentous step, how did Weizmann envisage his goal? Strangely enough, there is no answer to be found in the Archives at Rehovoth. Once or twice he had remarked to friends that the Jewish State ought to be rather like Switzerland. But in all his years as an active Zionist, Weizmann had never bothered to consider seriously the constitution, the party system, or the kind of democracy a Jewish nation would require.

This refusal to consider hypothetical questions and political problems in the abstract was characteristic of Weizmann's organic Zionism. Although he will be remembered as the creator of the Balfour Declaration, he had a deep scepticism about manifestos and formal declarations and was constantly chiding his followers for attaching to them an undue importance. Hence we can say that it was an act of Weizmann's deliberate policy that the construction of the Jewish State was undertaken without any blueprint or advance planning. For his belief was in action. He held that, once immigration began, the Jewish community in Palestine would begin to evolve spontaneously and organically its own social and political institutions. Those institutions could not be prefabricated by Zionist politicians and planted ready-made in Palestine. They could only grow on the soil of Israel. So, too, no one could evolve a theory of Jewish democracy outside Palestine and then tell the Yishuv how to conduct their affairs. A genuinely Jewish democracy could only emerge from the struggle of Jews living in their National Home.

To-day Weizmann's pragmatism may sound obvious and unoriginal. Yet until the mid-1930s it was an attitude which had to be defended against the "Declarationists," who said, "It's no good sending people to Palestine unless you have worked out in advance what they are to do and published it in a Manifesto."

It has been suggested that Weizmann's refusal to theorise was something he had learnt from Britain. There is as little evidence for this view as there is for the suggestion that he learnt anything from British democracy. When I was reading in the Rehovoth Archives, I asked to be shown any references in Weizmann's letters either to British politics or to social conditions in Lancashire, where he lived for so many years. One single letter was found for me, in which he mentions to his wife the terribly sad look of the workers as they go into a factory. But that is all. When I learnt this, I couldn't help contrasting Weizmann's concentration on the plight of his own Jewish people with the attitude of another foreigner who lived for many years in Manchester, Friedrich Engels. Engels came to Lancashire as a cotton manufacturer but, as the collaborator of Karl Marx, he concerned himself passionately with the condition of the workers and, as we all know, the Marx-Engels analysis of class-war was worked out in terms of Lancashire. Weizmann had just as acute a mind and, when he was dealing with his own people, was just as interested in social conditions and social policies. But, unlike Marx and Engels, he did not feel moved by the condition of the workers in Lancashire because they were not *his* workers and the problem was not *his* problem. Marx and Engels were self-conscious internationalists, who believed in the unity of the working class. He was a self-conscious Jewish nationalist, who believed that the Jewish worker of the Diaspora was separated by his Jewishness from the workers around him. That is why he conducted himself throughout his sojourn in Britain as a stranger and always refused to interfere or even to interest himself in British domestic politics, except in so far as they affected the Palestine question. The only obligation he felt was to persuade British politicians of all parties to espouse the Jewish cause.

THIS indifference to British social conditions and detachment from British domestic politics goes some way to explain the contradiction between his Radical role in Zionist politics and the acquiescent attitude he adopted towards British Imperialism. When Weizmann was handling problems of immigration into Palestine, he was not shocked by any proposal, however extreme it might appear, if it could be shown to assist in settlement on the land. Many Jewish leaders in the West—in particular, many wealthy donors—were appalled by the idea of the Kibbutz and wrote collective settlements off as "rank Communism." Weizmann, however, backed it enthusiastically because he saw in it a method of turning Jewish intellectuals into pioneers and thus breaking the urban commercial tradition of his people. His own life was too successful an example of private enterprise to give him much sympathy for orthodox State Socialism. But he accepted socialised agriculture,

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at least as a temporary expedient, because he rightly recognised that a method must be found for farming land on which no profit could be shown for many years. Land nationalisation was another concept which shocked some Jewish leaders. Once again, Weizmann accepted it as the best way of establishing the central land purchasing authority essential at the time.

He was equally unacademic when faced with the dispute between the trade unions, demanding that highly-paid Jewish labour must replace Arabs in the citrus groves, and the orange-growers, unwilling to sacrifice their profits to Socialist ideology. Here, once again, he judged the problem by the single standard: which solution will help to build a Jewish nation? He saw that, if Jews were to be persuaded to accept the harsh life of the countryside, they could not be degraded to the standard of the Arab land-worker. Hence his readiness to back Ben Gurion and other labour leaders who preached the doctrine that, whatever the cost, the State of Israel must be based not on Arab fellahin but on Jewish manual labour, not on an impoverished peasantry but on a free trade union of agricultural workers. For Ben Gurion and his colleagues in the Histadrut, this mystique was the core of their Zionism. For Weizmann it was only one of the many *motifs* to be used in inspiring Jews to build the Jewish State. Hence his comfortable certainty that, when the era of pioneering was over and prosperity achieved, everyone would be glad to see the austerity and severity of the collective settlements disappear.

On this point Weizmann's pragmatism sometimes brought him very near to an acceptance of the "white settler" mentality that has had such disastrous effects in Kenya and Algeria. As a Socialist, Ben Gurion saw that what was basically wrong with the white settler in Africa was his refusal to do menial tasks and his determination to be an overseer, not a worker. The greatest contribution, indeed, of Ben Gurion and his colleagues at this period was their refusal to accept the rather complacent bourgeois standards of material comfort which Weizmann too easily assumed to be universal. One cannot inspire the kind of devotion required to found a *Kibbutz* on a desolate hillside in Galilee or in the tropical heat of the Jordan valley by the kind of tolerant scepticism which Weizmann displayed towards the earnest doctrinal wrangles of the *Kibbutznik*. But it is to Weizmann's credit that, although he could not resist laughing at the hair-shirted puritanism of these earnest Socialists, he saw that they were doing an essential job and always backed them against their critics.

Where Weizmann ceased to be either radical or even sceptical was in his attitude to the British Empire. Here the critical, questing mind, ready to consider every proposal, however extreme, was disconcertingly acquiescent. Weizmann accepted almost without question the virtues of the Empire and assumed that one of the tasks of the Jewish nation would be to protect Britain's Imperial interests on the Suez Canal. Only the hard and bitter events of the 1930s drove him, against his deepest inclination, into opposition to Britain.

The key to this apparent contradiction lies, once again, in Weizmann's pragmatic statesmanship. In that schoolboy letter at the age of eleven, he had argued that the Jews must have the protection of a Great Power. Now he added, "Whatever revolutionary methods I adopt in getting the Jews into Palestine, I can't do it without the support of Great Britain. And if I want British support, I've got to win the confidence of the British Government. I've got to take the ruling class at its face value. I've got to put the best interpretations on everything it says. Because, if I don't, where am I?" In retrospect, this attitude may be condemned as opportunist. But I believe it was the only conceivable way, first, of obtaining the Balfour Declaration from the wartime Coalition and then, after the war, of persuading a reluctant British Government to accept the Mandate and create a British Protectorate for the embryonic Jewish State.

THE fact that he refused to criticise British Imperial policy did not mean that Weizmann was blind to the difficulties and the dangers of relying on British Governments. On the contrary, he showed remarkable foresight in anticipating the problems which the Mandate would bring. Here, for example, is a letter which Weizmann wrote but never sent to Winston Churchill. After he had finished it he was advised it was better not to write quite so frankly to an Englishman. So there it lies in the Rehovoth Archives, unsent and (until now) unpublished. The date is July 1921, six weeks after the May pogrom—the first of the troubles which were to destroy the Mandate. An Arab delegation was about to arrive in London and Weizmann was anxious lest the Colonial Secretary should succumb to the pressure of his officials and repudiate the Balfour Declaration. The whole letter is too long to reproduce, but here are the most arresting passages.*

Dear Mr. Churchill,

. . . I should not be writing to you now if I did not believe that there was a natural alliance,

* The full text will be published in my forthcoming *A Nation Reborn* (Hamish Hamilton, London, and Atheneum, New York).

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almost an identity of interest, between Zionism and England in Palestine. . . . On the other hand, there are some amongst us who are beginning to reproach me for what I think you will count as a virtue in a British subject. They say: "The alliance with Great Britain on which you lean is piercing your hand. Great Britain used Zionism to confirm the position won in Palestine by its arms; but, that moral position won, it now scorns the degrees by which it ascended to it, and is about to throw you and your ladder down." This sort of reproach touches in a very sore place, for I have regretfully to admit that recent British policy in Palestine has been disappointing. . . .

The best beginning of my complaint against present policy in Palestine is in the speech of Sir Herbert Samuel on June 3rd of this year. What the Balfour promise meant, Sir Herbert said, was that some among the Jews, "within the limits that are fixed by the numbers and interests of the present population, should come to Palestine in order to help by their resources and efforts to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants." I can attach no meaning to these words but this, that the Jewish National Home of the war-promise has now in peace-time been transformed into an Arab national home. . . .

And, as though this injury were not enough in itself, its hurt is increased by the occasion on which it is inflicted. I do not want to exaggerate the stories of Arab outrages on Jews, but I have always desired that as little as possible should be said about them. After all, things just as bad occur in Egypt and India, and nothing is said. What is peculiar to Palestine is that these outrages should actually be used as propaganda against the victims and that Jews in Palestine should be beaten, as it were, with their own crutches. I cannot understand it except in the theory of an anti-Zionist kink in some official minds. Jews who came to Palestine on the strength of a British promise and a Mandate, are made the objects of brutal attacks by the Arabs, and the Government intends to propitiate the Arabs, prohibits the immigration of Jews for a season, and whittles down the Balfour promise to nothing. . . . I have been blamed for saying that what we want is a state in Palestine that is Jewish, as England is English. I will so far amend that as to say that we want a Palestine that is Jewish in the sense that Great Britain is English, but that is the irreducible bed-rock of our demands. It is not perhaps so much the fault of the High Commissioner having made his speech of June 3rd. The trouble lies deeper (if I may say so). The conditions for his becoming an effectual managing trustee of the British and Zionist interests have not been created. He was given the trust estate with encumbrances which tied the hands of Sir Herbert Samuel or of anyone not endowed with more than ordinary strength and resolution.

Let me explain in more detail what these encumbrances were. The first was a very imperfect sympathy between the military administration and the Zionists. . . . The same insubordination (if I may so call it) was reproduced in the civil administration. You yourself have said that nine-tenths of the officials in Palestine are completely out of sympathy with Zionism. Whose fault was that? . . . The Government thought that they had done their whole duty by appointing Sir Herbert Samuel. But even if he had been stronger than he is, he would still have been powerless to discharge his duty with nine-tenths of his officials opposed to Zionism. We are reproached for not establishing better relations with the Arabs of Palestine. How was that possible with the balance between us oscillating and with the Government on the Hill speaking one policy and the Government in the Plain acting another? This oscillation was an invitation to the Arabs to be restive in the hope that they might further disturb the balance in their own favour. They were not discouraged in Palestine; they have even been encouraged by prominent men in England and in Palestine in their policy of opposition and obstruction. A hero at Government House might perhaps have established equilibrium. But I cannot bring myself to censure Sir Herbert Samuel for not being a superman and carrying off the gates of Gaza on his own back. I realise only too acutely how manifold and world-wide the distractions of the Government have been. Since the peace, devolution of a sort may well have seemed the only way out; but this devolution was on a foundation of sand.

Sir Herbert Samuel's encumbrances became greater, for presently he found himself hampered too by the anti-waste agitation and by the traditional doubts of Liberalism over anything that might by any stretch of the imagination seem to savour of Imperial adventure. . . . On the accusation of waste, may I be allowed to offer some considerations. It is a charge that I feel very keenly because the vulgar idea of Jews is that they are all millionaires and the suggestion that they are battening on the poor British taxpayer is very damaging. Believe me, the chief support to Zionism comes not from the rich but from the poor Jews who in many cases, by stinting their bodily wants, sustain their ages-old ideal. . . .

The answer to the charge of waste is threefold. The stock objection to the acquisition of new responsibilities is the speculative character of the economic development, the doubt whether there are the makings in the new country of a state that can stand by itself, and the fear of military commitments. In all these regards the situation in Palestine is exceptionally favourable. You are assured of the influx of a people in which patriotism is already formed and who would feel themselves under a deep obligation to you. You are working with an organisation which is prepared to take a great deal of the financial responsibility for the upbuilding of the country, and finally, if it is the cost of the garrison that appears too high, you could solve it, supposing that all else failed and you cared for that solution, by arming and organising the Jewish colonists. Was a colonisation ever conducted under such favourable conditions? . . .

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Secondly, if there were no Palestine it would, I believe, be necessary to create one in the Imperial interest. It is a bastion to Egypt. On the one side, the existence of a Jewish Palestine leaves you absolutely free to follow whatever policy may be most convenient to you, and enables you, if you wished, to evacuate Egypt altogether and to concentrate in the Canal Zone with your army based on Palestine. The real defence of Egypt against foreign enemies is at sea and on land in Palestine, and if one was paying three times as much on the military garrison of Palestine one would be purchasing three strategic advantages very cheaply.

Lastly, you have set up a great Arab kingdom in Mesopotamia, but for all that you will have to rely in Palestine on the Jews for your loyal element. . . . It is difficult to understand how one can build on Arab loyalty so near the vital communications across the Isthmus of Suez. All one has seen and heard of the Arab movement leads one to believe that it is anti-European.

The Palestine-Zionist policy, far from being waste, becomes a necessary insurance that we quote to you at a lower rate than anyone else could dream of. . . .

I write to beg of you not to throw away the substance for the shadow of strength, not to buy temporary accommodation at the cost of permanent accession of strength and it might be (if the promise were not kept) at the price of honour, and, finally, to take a lesson from the Turks, who maintained order in Palestine with three men and a boy. Why? Because they knew their own minds, miserable as they were, and never suffered an ambiguity to infect their policy. You can do the same if you know your own minds and act on the awe that your settled will inspires everywhere in the world. . . .

This letter proves that Weizmann was not, as some of his adversaries pretended, without comprehension of British weaknesses. He understood Britain better than some of his critics, but he also knew that he had to trust us and acquiesce in our Imperial powers. This involved an inconsistency in his values and a quite artificial division in his mind between the Jewish area, where he was critical and radical, and the British area, where he was conservative and acquiescent. But the fact is that only a man capable of this inconsistency could have obtained the Balfour Declaration.

THE last feature of the false Weizmann legend that needs exploding is the accusation that he was anglicised and that the attraction he exerted in London was the result of his acquired British tastes and attitudes. The truth is the precise opposite. The attraction of Weizmann for the British was precisely that he was the most Jewish Jew we had met. He impressed us *because* he was not Western, *because* he was not assimilated, *because* he was utterly proud to be a Russian Jew from the Pale, *because* he had no feeling of double loyalty, *because* he knew only one patriotism, the love of a country that did not yet exist.

There remains the charge that Weizmann was pro-British. If by this is meant that he subordinated the establishment of the Jewish State to the interests of the British Empire, I regard the accusation as completely unfounded. Indeed, most of our Arabists assert the precise opposite —that this crafty Jew persuaded Balfour, Milner, and Lloyd George to subordinate Britain's Imperial interests to a Jewish cause which endangered Britain's whole Middle Eastern position. Yet this does not dispose of the whole indictment. Weizmann, as we have seen, was enamoured of Britain, particularly of the British ruling class, by which, after 1917, for a period at least, he was treated as something of a lion. It is never easy to dislike people who are enraptured by your personality, and when this unknown Jew from Motol found that Balfour, Milner, Lloyd George, Salisbury, and many other great and mighty rulers of the British Empire had fallen under his spell, he not unnaturally regarded them as good people, who were basically to be trusted. Nevertheless, it is not my impression that, in any of his countless diplomatic dealings with successive Governments, Weizmann let the British off lightly. Particularly in the 1930s, lesser men might have given up hope of persuading either the officials or the politicians to fulfil a promise whose consequences were in such stark contrast to those expected. I can think of no occasion on which Weizmann was guilty of appeasement in his relations with Britain. If he yielded, as he frequently did, to *force majeure*, he did so only after having ensured, by extremely competent lobbying, the maximum parliamentary obstruction! No man knew better than he the art of using the conscience and ambition of British politicians (including, perhaps, of the author) in the interests of the Jewish State.

A personal anecdote will help to illustrate this point. In 1948, during the last phase of independence, I was staying at Rehovoth with Weizmann and a large reception was given in my honour. At one point a gushing woman pushed towards me and said, "I must introduce our Commander-in-Chief, Yigal Yadin, to our pro-Jewish guest, Mr. Crossman." For the first time I looked into the big, quizzical eyes of the archæologist turned soldier and wondered what he would say. "Mr. Crossman is not pro-Jewish," he remarked, "but pro-British. After all, he was the prime author of the Anglo-American Commission's Report and I remember that, when we were discussing our attitude to it, Dr. Weizmann remarked on the ruthlessness of

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some English politicians. 'This Report,' he told us angrily, 'was nicely calculated to concede the minimum to the Jews in order to obtain their acquiescence.' " I can remember that the throng around me seemed to melt uncomfortably away and I was left with Yadin smiling at me and, behind him, the sardonic face of Weizmann, who had overheard the conversation.

What is true, however, is that Weizmann increasingly believed in the mutual value of the Anglo-Jewish association. There is no evidence that any such idea had entered his head either when he arrived in England or in 1906, during his first talk to Balfour. At that time he was appealing purely and simply to British generosity. But during the negotiations before the Balfour Declaration there began to develop in his mind a sense that destiny had united the fate of the British and the Jewish people. And this article of faith was then confirmed by all kinds of strategic and economic arguments. We have already seen in the draft letter which he never sent to Winston Churchill an illustration of this aspect of Weizmann's Zionism. As the new settlers began to pour in, his conviction grew that Britain needed a reliable democratic ally in the Middle East and that only a Jewish community, rooted in the soil of its ancient homeland, could provide it.

But the most powerful argument in Weizmann's mind for the British connection was that any other connection would have been far worse for the Jews. No one could deny that the creation of a National Home required the protection of a Great Power. And, if that Great Power were not Britain, who else was available? At one time, before President Wilson had been repudiated by Congress, there seemed to be a chance that the Americans would consent to hold the Mandate. Weizmann was always opposed to the idea, and the troubles of 1945 to 1948 never shook this view. I remember discussing with him the appalling incident when two British sergeants, who had been taken as hostages, were hanged in reprisal for the execution of two *Irgun* terrorists. What made the *Irgun*'s revenge more terrible was the attachment of a booby trap to the body of one of the sergeants, which killed one of the men who tried to cut it down. The photograph on the front page of most of the popular British newspapers on the day after the crime was one of the most terrible I have ever seen. Weizmann's comment was characteristic. "If the sergeants had been American and not British," he observed to me, "we should have had pogroms in New York and Chicago. Bevin may be terrible, but the American Army would have behaved far worse than yours."

I shall have something more to say on this theme, but here I am only concerned to analyse the character and extent of Weizmann's pro-Britishness. It contained three elements. First, a rational recognition that, since Britain was the Mandatory, any responsible Jewish leader must conform the development of the National Home to British requirements, at least until it was strong enough to fend for itself. Secondly, a gratitude to the country which had accepted him as a foreigner and the liberalism of whose ruling classes he savoured with especial pleasure. Thirdly, an instinct, first felt by a schoolboy and later fully developed by a statesman, that the destinies of the two people were linked together, in the sense that they required the same kind of world and the same kind of balance of power in order to secure their freedoms.

Was this view shared by British politicians? Probably, in the case of the authors of the Balfour Declaration, the answer is *Yes*. But, as soon as the difficulties began to multiply in the 1920s, the sense of a common destiny rapidly weakened on the British side and was finally transformed, in the case of Attlee and Bevin, into a bitter conviction that the creation of a Jewish State would impair Britain's Imperial communications and oil supplies. Only a handful of British politicians remained faithful to the vision once shared with Weizmann.

IT IS against this background that we can measure his real achievement. His role was not that of the courtier-diplomat, paring down the claims of his small people in order to suit the imperial requirements of Britain. On the contrary, his achievement was to charm three British statesmen out of their usual concentration on national self-interest and persuade them to take a great risk for the sake of a good cause. This is not something the British have done very often in their history. That we did it in 1917 was due to the personality of a Russian Jewish chemist, who out-argued Milner and out-charmed Lloyd George and Balfour. In wartime, at the height of their power, they looked into the tragic eyes of this Jew, and felt their consciences stirred. Then, just when the tension was becoming a little un-British, they found themselves laughing—because the next facet of Weizmann's character was his humour, the most intensely Jewish I have ever experienced. And after that came the third transformation. The tragic Jew, the sardonic humorist, within a minute had been transformed into a scientist, cooling his listeners off with a douche of sparkling factual analysis. No wonder few British politicians could resist him.

Here, indeed, is one of the very rare cases where one can assert with confidence that one

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man's personality changed the course of history. Without the personality of Weizmann there would have been no Balfour Declaration and no Mandate. There would have been only the slow, painful kind of build-up of Jewish life in Zion which had preceded World War I. And this might well have been extinguished in the 1930s by the convulsions of Arab nationalism.

But one question remained. After the Balfour Declaration had been signed, and after the Mandate had been set up, how long would the spell hold? You can charm the British out of their national egoism for a certain time. But would the charm last until the Yishuv had grown strong enough to fend for itself? The supreme justification of Weizmann as a Jewish statesman is that the spell he cast gave the Yishuv just enough time. When it failed, his own people had grown up to the point where they were strong enough to disown him as pro-British and accept as leaders men fitted not to charm the British but to get rid of them.

Intrusions

On rare mornings
  a man at my table
gazes into the left-hand sun.
  Huge heat arriving
snuffles glass and bars against
  his doubtless smile.

Seas come crashing, horned waves
  airing their volume;
bull-roarers
  make brave men tremble; pitch
flops on gorgon shields as yelping
  gnomes flit batlike by
through cactus stars to holy laughter.

I stand on the threshold, barefoot;
  boosted by half a plank, having guessed
its place by rule of suns,
  as on some thick fly throng
a bone Electra, royally gaoled,
  I print my footmark.

It is a room
  of rod and exit; taller weeds
dry in the jar on a plinth of blue.
  Yet not in fear
this lone loon starts on my intrusion,
  waves in vacancy, with dwindling
hands held to an old old friend.

Christopher Middleton

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THEATRE

The Seeming Truth

By Nigel Dennis

IT IS puzzling to think that once upon a time an artist was only a man who painted pictures, and it is hard to say when all the rest of us became artists too—just when we poets, composers, novelists, playwrights, critics, and chorus-girls one-and-all dropped our plain designations and, by becoming artists, pushed our more-glamorous pictorial characteristics into the limelight. Of course, we soon found that as a result of us all being artists, none of us was really anything, since by weight of numbers we had driven ourselves out as digits. Attempts to thin the mob by calling the original artists (the brush-men) poets, or even composers, and thus weeding them out of their own stadium, were quite insufficient; so at some point we introduced the word "serious" to set us off from our inferiors. From then on we could take for granted that though every Tom, Dick, and Harry was an artist, only a few of us could rank as serious artists—a scheme that worked well enough until Tom, Dick, and Harry got wind of it, and dubbed themselves serious artists too. This meant that we, the self-chosen few, must add yet another adjective if we were still to stand outside the company of research students and copy-writers, and it was then that we added the word "creative" to our title. There the matter rests, for the time being. To be an artist is so-so; to be a serious artist is up and coming; to be a serious creative artist is the very last word.

The most awkward consequence of this situation is that those who might best deserve the title of serious creative artist are the last people in the world to whom it can be given. We cannot doubt that Miss Joan Littlewood is a creative artist, or that Mr. Orson Welles is a serious creative artist—but what can we say of, for example, Stravinsky and Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde? No sooner do we try out the full title on them than we see that far from describing their ardent, fanciful natures, it only indicates precisely what they are *not*. Why should this be so? Chiefly, perhaps, because the wrapping of proven artistry in a flowery title seems only to muffle, rather than embellish, it—indeed, the arts are so intensely haughty in their republicanism that any fiddling with their austerity has a demeaning effect. It is doubtful if Tennyson's work has ever recovered from its peerage, and even that severe accolade, the Order of Merit, hangs rather idly when pinned above the copious breast of Henry James. It would seem that a large sum of money is the only dignity that a painter or poet can receive without becoming self-conscious, worldly, and neglectful.

Perhaps, then, we may assume that the serious creative artist, the one who *enjoys* his title, is never an artist at all. He is, rather, someone who needs to justify his claim by preferring it with as many adjectives as possible. He is, therefore, more a condition of personal ambition than anything else—and the fault of his particular ambition is that, unlike the ordinary artist, he is not out to make something that is absolutely independent of him, but to create someone out of himself. He is thus the selfish novelist who writes a book in which his own standing as a Liberal counts for everything, and the facts with which he deals, and the art of expressing them, for nothing at all. He is the critic who devotes his life to finding in the works he studies meanings and interpretations more complicated than those provided by the authors. He is the conductor who is determined to leave Bach richer than he found him; the biographer who invents his subject's very thoughts and passions; the editor who contributes to all contributions. Indeed, there is no form in which this Protean gentleman does not appear to-day; but perhaps his most illustrative shape is that of the American columnist. Here we have an ambitious newspaperman who, by a combination of talent and endeavour, has raised himself out of the ruck of anonymity and into the sphere of serious creativeness. The ensign of his rank is a photograph of himself, chosen to indicate both the sort of man he is and the sorts of subjects his column will embrace. If he is an expert on the Far East, his face will show it in an expression of mixed shrewdness, sympathy, and un-Oriental integrity. If politics is his line, the cigarette in the corner of his mouth, or the straight jointure of his lips, will indicate one who can cut to the centre of every sly matter. A

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day comes—and it is no exaggeration to say this—when the subject-matter of such a columnist ceases to exist in its own right and lives only in his column. Whole continents can be personalised in this way, and the columnist can himself live in the illusion that his own sentences are the matter itself, and his face the containing territory. Briefly, all facts, all independent forms, have ceased to be present: only the serious creative commentator is real.

MR. CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON described such a situation in last month's *Notes and Topics*. Mr. FitzGibbon went to see *Henry V in Battledress* at the Mermaid Theatre; but all he saw was a play called *Julius Gellner and Bernard Miles*. This made him extremely angry, because he had not trudged all the way to Puddle Dock just to see *their* creative faces. Mr. FitzGibbon noted immediately that, for Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles, there was *no fact of Shakespeare*. Even the *idea* of Shakespeare was only a dream-shape that Mr. Gellner had sculpted with Mr. Miles. There was a vestige of *text* named Shakespeare, but this had slept so long that it was as dead. Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles stooped and kissed it. None of us will forget the shriek with which it awoke.

Mr. FitzGibbon concluded that people like Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles "mucked about" with Shakespeare to make him "better box-office." We cannot agree with such an impersonal conclusion. *Henry V* is a play which demanded titanic vehemence from Shakespeare, to propel the vast amount of moralising he had put in it. It was this vehemence, this bursting of blood vessels, that excited the serious creative artist in Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles. They saw that by substituting their own blood vessels for Shakespeare's, they would get a more *personal* burst. Instead of producing the play, they would produce themselves. The risk was enormous. How could they be sure that any audience would pay to sit through *them*? And how would the actors remember that this play was not *Henry V*, when here and there pieces of the text kept creeping in? The effect on the box-office might have been so disastrous that Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles would have got nothing in the till except a serious sense of creative contentment.

This is the risk that every serious creative producer must run when he determines to raise Lazarus by expiring his own breath into him. Moreover, as time flies by, the donated wind must fly along with it, otherwise the producer himself will seem as defunct as the recipient. He cannot, at this late stage, breathe Marx into *Romeo and Juliet*, or even Jung into *Back to Methuselah*, because some serious creative predecessor has already done so. What other methods are there? Well, Producer A. dressed all his Greeks in pyjamas—and there is nothing like pyjamas for indicating a certain sort of decadence. Producer B. restored the period nightgowns, but presented the whole play in almost total darkness. Producer C. had the idea of making the soothsayers shout incessantly from the gallery, in a special Brooklyn adaptation; while Producer D. suggested the entire Parthenon with undraped orange-boxes. Producer E. had a revolving stage—and there is no greater aid to serious creative artistry than a stage which, by wheeling, ramping, spinning, and bowling, so rivets the attention of the audience that the *passé* declamations of the dead author are quite gone with the wind.

All these serious creative artists—all, all, honourable serious creative artists—ran from time to time into authors' lines that were at variance with their own serious creative conceptions: such lines they were bound, for the author's own sake, to excise, or to have muttered, or to speak for laughs if they were muttered by old men, or to put at the beginning if they came at the end. The cast of serious creative artists—known to our forefathers as actors, and even players—often fell into line very readily, deeming it a serious test and a creative change to play Hector's death for laughs and wear, as Laocoon, the beard and glasses of a psychiatrist. For, all these were serious creative ways of restoring to a dead author the bloom which time had rubbed from him and covering him with a more up-to-date bloom. And yet, we cannot, interestingly enough, remember that the responsible producers ever got lasting credit for their serious creative artistry. The play on which they all worked is still sitting there numbly, waiting for its next blood transfusion, but very few people can remember clearly which producer used the orange-boxes on it and which one did it in the dark. The reason for this is that there are far too many serious creative artists. We recognise their spirit, their energy, and their favourite phrase: "The play's the thing." But they themselves, we cannot single out at all. They are just our faceless *Zeitgeist*, our prevailing wind, our anonymous caterers. Mention to Mr. FitzGibbon in a few years' time the names of Mr. Gellner and Mr. Miles: he will only give a puzzled frown. "Let's see, now," he will say, "Gellner and Miles—weren't they the husband-and-wife team that wrote that creative life of Van Gogh? No? Then, did they do that serious production of *King Lear*, with Kenneth Williams as Goneril? . . . Oh, well, in that case they were probably just a firm of butchers I used to know in Essex."

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HAVING collected all this cannon, let us try the experiment of training it on *The Merchant of Venice*. Here is a play that cannot fail to bring out the serious creative artist even in the best of us. Apart from any inborn instinct we may have to "muck about" with our favourite dramatist, we have, in the case of *The Merchant of Venice*, what we regard as a moral duty to muck about. Our times forbid anti-Semitism. They demand Jewish compensation and recompense on a scale too great for computation. But how are we to explain this to Shakespeare?

Mr. Michael Langham's production at Stratford explains our situation to Shakespeare with such extraordinary clarity that there is no moment of the evening when we cannot feel that what faces us on the stage is our own age, our very selves. This is why his production has left the daily critics crazed with admiration: they have said, all of them, with wonderful honesty, that never before have they seen a *Merchant of Venice* that was more like themselves. Only the *Daily Sketch* said: "I still couldn't laugh"—to indicate that in spite of everything Mr. Langham had done for the play, Shakespeare's point of view was still detectable. We pull off our hats to the blunt *Sketch*, but we cannot agree with it. The most we can say is, that as Mr. Langham has hardly touched the original text, we can, in so far as we are able to hear it, form our own conclusions as to what it is about.

We suggest that when Shakespeare wrote the play, he put forward two arguments. There was Shylock's, which demanded revenge as punishment for Christian contempt and hatred; and there was Antonio's, which runs:

> *I oft delivered from his forfeitures*
> *Many that have at times made moan to me;*
> *Therefore he hates me.*

Which of these arguments is the correct one, we cannot say: we can only say that Mr. Langham, as a serious artist of his time, has no intention of considering Antonio's. His duty, as he sees it, is first to assume that Shakespeare was on Shylock's side and, second, to create, in support of this assumption, whatever "business" is needed to put it over. Anti-Semitism, as we know it to-day, must somehow be projected creatively backwards nearly four hundred years, in order that Shakespeare may be brought seriously forward over the same period. Anything in the text that hinders this recreation must be so played as to make it innocuous. It is not enough, for example, that Antonio and his friends enjoy masques and revels: if Shylock is to be a victim of anti-Semitic persecution, they must be dressed as Roaring Boys of the 18th century and make a boorish impression. The ladies of Belmont must be chickens and kittens, all fluff and chatter: even a little dignity might steal some of Shylock's thunder. It has been said that Miss Dorothy Tutin lacks the physical stature of a Portia; but this is untrue: for Mr. Langham's Portia, stature was the one thing to be avoided, and thus, what little Miss Tutin has, she was in duty bound to be at pains to decrease. Dressed as Buttons, the bell-hop, she presented her case against Shylock with irreproachable emptiness, well supported by the Duke of Venice. He, being an old man, was hardly able to stand, let alone grace a judicial bench; but all Shakespearean characters past middle-age must expect that nowadays. As for Jessica, whose slyness and thievery are responsible for so much of Shylock's discomfort, we should like to have seen more of her; but Mr. Langham seemed to keep her rather mutely in the background, as though she might otherwise let the right side down.

It had always been our impression that Shylock, if the text be true, had remarkable power and liberty for a persecuted man and was perfectly able to assert his rights:

> *He plies the Duke at morning and at night,*
> *And doth impeach the freedom of the state,*
> *If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,*
> *The Duke himself, and the magnificoes*
> *Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;*
> *But none can drive him from the envious plea*
> *Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.*

But it took Mr. Langham's production to show us what a walk-over Shylock's career must have been, with an opposition of nothing but jolly girls, tottering old judges, and hearty junior executives.

Naturally, all this left the stage empty save for Mr. Peter O'Toole, who filled it with the greatest port. His Shylock was so absolutely right by modern standards that the audience was ravished as only Narcissus can be when the best-loved of all faces appears in the water. "Oh, me alone! Make you a sword of me?" cries Coriolanus to his flatterers—and there can be no doubt that Mr. O'Toole was a very great Coriolanus indeed: he and Mr. Langham between them could hardly have forged a sword better for running Goebbels through. One soon forgot, as it were a bag of bulls-eyes, the pound of flesh that Mr. O'Toole was so determined to get: if he was so keen on it, he ought to have it, considering how badly he had been treated in the past and what a poor lot the others were. It was with admiration that we watched him putting a fine cutting-edge on his knife and testing it on a handkerchief held up by Tubal: whatever might happen to Antonio's heart, our own was in the right, contemporary, compassionate place.

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THE only problem that arises in such a production is: how to make the whole play jell? If we feel bound to make Shylock a great tragic figure, like Lear, how can we rumble along when he is off the stage—which he is for most of the play? This problem alone might be enough to suggest to a producer that Shylock was not intended to be an overwhelming figure. Perhaps we may go further and suggest that he was intended to be more the sort of villain that we find in Sweeney Todd, or Captain Hook, or Svengali—that is to say, a creature of melodrama rather than tragedy. As the wicked villain of melodrama he works in nicely with the romanticism of Belmont; as a somewhat comical villain, he fits even better. It is not much good arguing that the famous words: "Hath not a Jew eyes . . . etc." fix the stature of Shylock as tragic: they are the exceptional words; they run against the drift of the rest. A tragic figure *cannot* whet his knife publicly on the sole of his shoe, *cannot* mourn simultaneously his daughter and his ducats, *cannot* demand anything so grotesque as a pound of flesh. But stage-villains can do all these things, and are expected to. Moreover, if the gory parts of *The Merchant of Venice* were regarded as melodrama, the play would not need to be treated so seriously and so creatively—and might, in consequence, assume the form of a unified Elizabethan comedy, instead of a gawky representation of the 20th-century conscience.

If a producer followed such a pattern, *The Merchant of Venice* could probably not be produced at all. This would be perfectly understandable, for there is no reason why, when something horrible has happened in recent history, we should not refuse to produce a work of fiction that makes it laughable. The trouble is that we shall not proclaim any such self-denying ordinance. Our consciences will forbid us to play *The Merchant of Venice* true—but not to play it false. Indeed, the falser we play it, the more highly we shall respect ourselves. Every minute of it will be sixty seconds of disjointed self-tribute. There will be no *fact* of Shakespeare —any more than there is, in modern hands, a *fact* of Van Gogh, a *fact* of Bach, a *fact* of the Far East.

Luckily, *The Merchant of Venice* is an unusual case. And yet, it is also unusually pertinent in that it does its very best to draw our attention to the very problem we are discussing here. The Casket scenes, which we incline to dismiss as "dull" and devoid of contemporary interest, are devoted entirely to praising the virtues of honest lead and decrying the worth of gold and silver. As for ornament, it is dismissed as

> *The seeming truth which cunning times put on*
> *To entrap the wisest. . . .*

This suggests that even four hundred years ago, serious creative artists were hard at work under another name, and that it was as difficult for fact, to say nothing of art, to find a plain honest servant as it is to-day.

Letter from New York

THE first half of the 1959–60 New York theatre season, everyone sorrowfully agreed, was drab. I see no particular reason to lament this since as a spectator and critic I find it short-sighted to think of the theatre seasonally: it's like asking a friend, "What have you done for me recently?" The expectation that every four months (our theatre season is rarely longer than eight months) a batch of sensational new productions will be forthcoming is a mixture of æsthetic simple-mindedeness and mercantile anxiety.

Since my report on the new plays of the season must perforce reflect something of the barrenness of the overall "picture," I shall take the liberty of beginning with a few generalisations.

When I was in London last spring, I read the issue of ENCOUNTER which contained a review by Angus Wilson of Mary McCarthy's book of theatre criticism in which my own collection *Lies Like Truth* was also discussed. I was asked if I wished to comment on Mr. Wilson's remarks. I took this to mean "Do you want to find fault with or rebut any of Mr. Wilson's observations?" I did not. Mr. Wilson's article —"The Intellectual on the Aisle"—seemed to me in every important respect unexceptionable. Still it made me think of the difference between the literary attitude towards the theatre and my own which, as Mr. Wilson rightly pointed out, is that of a theatre man.

Mr. Wilson spoke of a certain theatre "provincialism"—which struck me as the only wholly innocent remark in his article. One might as well speak of literary provincialism or musical provincialism or painters' provincialism. The phrase was motivated by my having written that the part of Blanche du Bois in *Streetcar Named Desire* was one of the best parts written for an actress in the contemporary theatre. This apparently struck Mr. Wilson as immaterial to the consideration of the character. I wondered if he is equally taken aback (or amused) when a music critic in speaking of a serious composition points out in passing that the piece was well (or badly) written for a particular instrument.

Another thing in my book which puzzled (or again amused) Mr. Wilson was a statement I made "boldly" to the effect that I held *Waiting for Godot* a more significant play than *The Diary of Anne Frank*. I understand Mr. Wilson's surprise. What Mr. Wilson may not

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have realised is that to the greater part of the American theatre audience, to whom my book is largely addressed, *Waiting for Godot* if it exists at all is nonsense and *The Diary of Anne Frank* a highly-moving humanitarian document.

My point is simply this: I do not believe one can truly understand the theatre unless one understands it in all its complexity. The theatre is not only a matter of writing, acting, direction, design, architecture, but of social atmosphere, audience differentiation, historical occasion, financial organisation, economic situation.

It may be that the best theatre people have often shown more awareness of literary values than literary folk have of the theatre. For example, I remember reading an English review in which the critic defended Georg Büchner's *Danton's Death* even though, he suggested, it might not be a good play for the theatre. The fact is that *Danton's Death*—beside its other merits—is a magnificent theatre piece which has been the occasion of several memorable productions in Germany. What was lacking when it seemed a bad play in the theatre was the theatre equipment and talent to project it adequately.

My belief is that men of the theatre as well as men of letters fail to recognise that most production in America and in England is inferior in imaginative scope and creative mastery to the best writing done in either country. The reason for this ignorance is that both the economic organisation and a lack of a certain theatre tradition in the English-speaking countries do not permit theatre artists the freedom to employ the full store of the theatre's means. It is not from a lack of ability or artistic conscience that England and America have not fostered their equivalents of the Moscow Art Theatre or a Berliner Ensemble, or a continuous series of productions on the level of Max Reinhardt, Meyerhold, Vachtangov, and the various Studios of the Moscow Art Theatre. Because they have lacked a steady theatre tradition on the scale which has obtained since 1900 in Germany and Russia (not to mention others), most American and English theatre craftsmen themselves have lost sight of what the theatre can be.

There need be no "war" between literature and theatre—even when it is said that literature comes into the theatre both as inspiration and as a "servant" of the whole. One reason we are frequently befuddled into thinking of such a "war" may be that so many theatre people think of the repertoire of the Royal Court Theatre (no disparagement intended) as the height of dramatic achievement (because it is so much better than most of the plays presented, let us say, at the Globe), and literary people think of the Tennent productions as the height of stage technique (because they are done with a special professional polish).

All in all, I believe there is a great deal of ingenuous high-mindedness in most complaints about the theatre—often destructive as well as foolish. John Osborne, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Christopher Fry do not have to be world-shattering geniuses to win our approval. Nor do we have to despise the competent West End production of a Terence Rattigan play because it is not done like a Joan Littlewood production.

What stage-folk and their literary brethren ought constantly to keep in mind is that the theatre is an immediate art, fulfilling in the first place an immediate, one might say an almost momentary, need—and is thus contingent far more than any other art on many conditions unrelated to the permanent aspirations of individual artists or particular individuals in the audience. Though we must always keep the highest standards in view we must not wield them like cudgels to murder present action which responds to present need. Only hindsight instructs us what has been profoundly valuable in the theatre—and even then we might do well to be circumspect in our assertions. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a great show in its day —and didn't Shaw sneer somewhat at *The Importance of Being Earnest* while he praised *An Ideal Husband* and Henry Arthur Jones' *Michael and His Lost Angel*?

The American theatre is still "officially" and popularly *Broadway*. The "unofficial" theatre of the smaller communities and the "off-Broadway" movement in New York are growing apace. The latter limps and is bruised by economic hazards but one day in the not too distant future there will be a crisis in which the combined diseases of the "official" and the "unofficial" theatre will bring about a therapy and some semblance of health. The American theatre as it functions now cannot long survive its organised anarchy.

Though off-Broadway has not yet achieved the status among our play-goers that the Royal Court or even the Arts Theatre have in London, at least three new plays this season have attracted considerable critical attention.

The daily reviewers seemed particularly pleased by *The Prodigal* by Jack Richardson (aged twenty-five). It is a literate and intelligent play (influenced, I believe, by Giraudoux and other Frenchmen) on the theme of the *Orestia*. Richardson's Orestes is indifferent to the great issues of politics and social welfare which are the bone of contention between Agamemnon and Aegisthus; Clytemnestra's infidelity is almost

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incidental as is the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Orestes wants to live a "human," normal, or passively pleasant life divorced from commitment to any ideology. But the sweep of age-old passions and prejudice which create the myths of our world will force Orestes into the action that perennially leads to havoc and bloodshed.

The play undoubtedly shows promise but above all it is another manifestation of that moral atmosphere which augurs withdrawal from any specific civic or philosophic engagement. *The Prodigal* is in this sense meaningful, but it strikes me as a less original or cogent dramatic expression than is to be found in *The Connection* by Jack Gelber or in *The Zoo Story* by Edward Albee—to my mind the two most arresting plays of the New York season thus far.

*The Connection** is on the surface simply a picture of a drug addict's pad. A group of men —black and white—near-intellectuals and might-be workers—are seen throughout the evening waiting for their "fix." What is fascinating about this exhibition—apart from its thoroughly convincing naturalism (the actors and several excellent jazz musicians—also "junkies"—seem to be very much what they are called upon to represent) is the fact that in some strange way the play achieves a kind of poetry. This is not due to the play's self-conscious and badly-written framework in which the audience is informed that they are to witness an improvised demonstration—a sort of "Life Goes to the Party"—but to a feeling we get that the sufferers we see before us in their abject escape from life have attained a certain purity of pain, an intensity of removal from our workaday world —and therefore a kind of depraved but nonetheless penetrating challenge to it.

The Zoo Story, a short piece, narrows our sights down to one person: a boy cut off from everything by poverty, loneliness, perhaps homosexuality and the brazen complacency of a harsh city. The boy is seeking a connection which he can only find through violence—finally against himself. For he compels an innocent stranger almost unknowingly to kill him. The excellence of this play lies in its sharp focus, for one sees and understands not only the central figure himself but the larger environment of which he is a part and the alarming significance of that environment.

ONLY three productions of old plays have been presented on Broadway since October: *Much Ado About Nothing*—with John Gielgud and Margaret Leighton—received with admiration for its leading players and with reservations on other accounts. (Sir John himself did not appear wholly pleased with the production.) Shaw's *Heartbreak House* with Maurice Evans and a largely British cast (Diana Wynyard, Pamela Brown, Alan Webb, Diane Cilento, Dennis Price) was generally liked though there were some complaints that I had not directed the play with sufficient regard to its Chekhovian mood—an exact criticism since I do not feel that this or any of Shaw's plays is in the slightest degree Chekhovian—despite what one might infer from Shaw's preface. The Phœnix Theatre (an organisation mainly devoted to revivals) presented O'Neill's *The Great God Brown* which on the whole impressed its critics in 1926 more than it did either the press or the public now. For my part, I thought the play for all its fumbling symbolism and earnest candour—not to mention a production that in its attempt to capture the play's "stylisation" did not altogether embody the play's tremulous emotionalism—was still worth seeing.

The successes of the season thus far (I do not propose to dwell on the musicals: Rodgers' & Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* with Mary Martin, or *Take Me Along*, a version of O'Neill's comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!*) are William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker*—originally a television script—and Paddy Chayefsky's *The Tenth Man*.

The Miracle Worker is a sort of "documentary" recounting the struggle of a simple Irish girl who made Helen Keller out of a blind-deaf-mute child whose background and "character" gave promise of being little better than a "problem." The best scene in the play is wordless: the physical contest of the teacher to impress disciplined behaviour (or table manners) on the recalcitrant and violently wilful child. The scene is primitive theatre—beautifully done by the child Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft—and as such is highly effective. Like all primitive theatre when its thematic material is sound, it works for its audience despite its clinical aspect and other obvious crudities.

The Tenth Man is a comedy in which the operative values are only indirectly related to its plot. This concerns the exorcism of a *dybbuk* (a vengeful spirit of a wronged person which enters the living body of an innocent one). The ritual —which appears to affect not the girl from whose body the *dybbuk* is being driven but a young hysterical man who has just met and fallen in love with her—takes place in a ramshackle orthodox synagogue in one of New York's suburbs. What makes the play "go"—it is often very funny and is almost always rather sweet—is its colourfulness. Jewish humour—thoroughly familiar to the Jewish portion of the audience and titillating to most Gentiles—

* See also Richard Wollheim's comment in the April ENCOUNTER.

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combines with a certain wry sentimentality to box-office advantage. In the background—giving "depth" and popular appeal to the whole—is the sense of distress in the air of our anxious age and the primal need for some form of solace. What the author is saying semi-consciously and what moves the audience in the same way is that we "who believe in nothing" had better believe in some vaguely remembered and still atavistically respected faith no matter how little it convinces us rationally.

The play is actually a symptom of the cultural disarray of large sections of American Jewry whose relation to the past is tenuous and almost shamefacedly indulgent, and whose feeling for their present situation—like that of their fellow-citizens of other religious denominations—is well-meaning, confused, prayerful, and vulgar. It has been charmingly directed by Tyrone Guthrie (how did he get into this galley? he has an eye for oddity), and it is brilliantly cast with actors from everywhere: Arnold Marlé—London and Hamburg; David Vardi—Tel-Aviv; George Voskovec—Prague and New York; Lou Jacobi —Montreal; Jacob Ben-Ami—Odessa and New York, etc.

In regard to so-called "social" plays—of which America some years ago produced several striking examples—there have been very few this season and those we have are, so to speak, stealthily so. *The Gang's All Here* by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee is a melodramatic and fictional re-telling of our Harding administration scandals in which the president was first gulled by political advisers who were hardly more than racketeers into running for the office and then into being blinded to all sorts of national swindles. It is not a bad play as show-business goes. It holds one's attention; on a popular level it reminds our audiences of some of the less admirable features of the American way of life. In brief, *The Gang's All Here* has the quality of one of those "progressive" films that Warner Bros. used to produce in the middle 'thirties. They were the pride of the industry until they became something for which the producers felt called upon to apologise.

Fiorello, a new musical by Jerome Weidman and George Abbott, also has a liberal political facet because it deals with the early career of La Guardia, New York's honest and spectacular mayor of the Roosevelt era. The special charm of the show is not that it is, as some express it, "about something" but that it recalls a time when New York still possessed a personal tone, when it was still a city of neighbourhoods not as now a skyscraper development with five-and-ten-cent-store adjuncts.

The Andersonville Trial by Saul Levitt recalls an incident from our Civil War with an eye to the issue of whether there is a morally categorical imperative for a soldier to disobey his superior officer's orders when they are inhumanly brutal. (The Nuremberg trials are an instance in which this question was strikingly pertinent.) The question is raised and the progress of the 1865 trial at Andersonville, Georgia, is made exciting in a well-acted and sharply-directed José Ferrer production but the play fails to make a specific point so that the tension provoked is never satisfactorily released.

Peter Shaffer's *Five Finger Exercise*, being a play already known to Londoners and having been produced in New York with most of its original cast, need not detain us. It is only proper to say that it has been very cordially received, though it is not likely to carry all the impact here that it seems to have in England.

The most mature new play to be presented thus far in New York is Jean Anouilh's *The Fighting Cock* (*L'Hurluberlu*). It is not the best of Anouilh and it might easily be argued that it is not a particularly good play. I call it mature nevertheless because it bears the mark of the author's distinct personality in a semi-satiric vein—directed this time against himself. The play is often witty, occasionally even tender, and in its Paris production—not an especially distinguished one—it provided a civilised evening in the theatre. Anouilh might be described politically as an anarchist of the right, and the general who is the central figure—the "fighting cock"—of the play is against the whole drift of contemporary society. Anouilh voices his discontent but he does not glamorise his spokesman. On the contrary, he makes him as much a fool as a misfit, albeit a rather amusing one whose cantankerous exaggerations may elicit some sympathy even from those who view the problems of our time in quite different terms.

The play in New York is damaged by a bad production directed by Peter Brook—an artist I usually admire. What is wrong—apart from the possibility that Rex Harrison may be miscast as the general—is that Brook has treated the play as an irrelevant exercise in "style"—instead of a simple play of character with a real atmosphere. By inflating the production needlessly the play emerges as an elaborate charade which dissipates most of its values. The result is that while the direction and the fanciful sets were generally praised the event as a whole has pleased very few.

THIS BRINGS ME BACK to what I said at the outset: many people who are able to read a script with discernment are unable to see a play with equal perceptiveness. Their literary sense may be firm but they are theatre-blind.

Harold Clurman

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Paul Kruger's Heirs

Selfconsciousness of race began
Under a tall black upright hat
An ignorant, bigoted, wise old man
With eyes pouched up in purses of fat.

Mischance bequeathed him an eldorado
Greed and intrigue to take the bait
When war had passed like a tornado
Generosity turned up, late.

Noncombatants under a whip of shame
Invented duty, invented hope;
Above their pulpits God became
An *über-Ich* in cinemascope

Shrieking imperatives from the steeple
Signing proscriptions with either hand
Hinting, sly, that the chosen people
Would see one day the promised land.

Look at it then, the prize allotted
To an obsolete self-righteous cause
A demi-paradise besotted
With jealousies and rugby scores

The pivot of a continent
Balancing on each new bonanza:
Was that what the mariners meant
With their *bona esperanza*?

You say no other people knows
So well the anguish of retreat.
It is a statue's straddling pose
What nation never knew defeat?

But you took yours to bed with you
A prostitute or teddy bear
Claimed indignity as your due
And wept with gratified despair.

Now as the bitter morning rises
You pick revenge up like a gun
Ransack a drawer of fierce disguises
Determined not to be outdone
And step outside into the sun.

It does not claim the privilege
You claim, to comminate, defy.
It makes no judgment, gives no pledge
But watches with a steady eye
Out of a vast unpitying sky.

John Peter

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NOTES & TOPICS

New Light on Brecht

By no means the least horrifying aspect of the totalitarianism of our time is "the captive mind" and the erosion of the capacity to apprehend complex situations and facts. This is observable among even the most intelligent of followers and fellow-travellers (be it of Nazism, Fascism, McCarthyism, or Communism). The world, in their eyes, becomes reduced to a set of predictable clichés: "Four legs good—two legs bad!" And whatever cannot be fitted into the formula produces the symptoms of breakdown that Pavlov noted in his dogs when they were subjected to contradictory impulses. Having written a book about a Communist poet, who was also a cynic and had retained his sense of individuality and his sense of humour, I have been greatly amused to watch the conditioned reflexes of the pious and the orthodox. The picture of Brecht that I had drawn could *not* be true: either because he had spent the last years of his life in East Berlin (and must therefore have totally agreed with everything that went on there); or, alternatively, as I had quoted some of his privately expressed criticisms of abuses or cautiously disguised published attacks on the régime, this was proof that there *was* in fact "freedom of expression" in Communist East Germany (and, of course, the régime could not be called totalitarian). If Brecht was a good dramatist and the East German Communists had subsidised his theatre, this proved conclusively that the East German Communist régime *was* indeed good—why then should I want to argue that hundreds of thousands of its subjects had fled to the West? How could I claim that on June 17th, 1953, the workers had actually risen against the régime? Had I not *admitted* that it had subsidised a fine artist and was therefore a progressive social order? Why should people rise against a good government? Had I not conceded that Brecht was a convinced Marxist? How then could I suggest that he had been deeply disturbed by the rising of June 17th?

This is the Alice-in-Wonderland logic of the faithful which is again and again confronted by the infinitely less logical, far more complicated facts. Alfred Kantorowicz, like Brecht a Communist intellectual who had spent the years of World War II in America and had gone back to East Germany at about the same time that Brecht decided to settle there, has recently published his reminiscences. Kantorowicz fled from East Berlin to West Germany, after the Hungarian revolution had made him despair of Communism. His book* gives a moving first-hand account of the plight of the intellectuals (many were talented and well known) who had gone back to East Germany and found themselves living in a replica of the hated Nazi state of police controls, cultural censorship, and mass repression.

> While we had faithfully fought for freedom and justice against the Fascist barbarians, Fascism and Barbarism had risen behind us in words and deeds and obscurantism in the offices of the bureaucrats and apparatchiks.

Kantorowicz speaks of the terrible dilemma of the members of his own circle who

> are trying as best they can to oppose the evil régime, even if not every one of them may have the determination, after all he has been through, to face once more the penitentiaries and torture-chambers of a dictatorial state, or to cut himself off from all his ties and set out once more on the road into an uncertain exile. . . .

Kantorowicz was a close friend of Brecht, and Brecht appears repeatedly in his narrative of the post-war years in East Berlin. After the Twentieth Party Congress and Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech, "Bert Brecht . . . spoke among his friends of Stalin only as the 'meritorious murderer of the people'" (on the analogy of the Soviet title "Meritorious Artist of the People" which is awarded to successful actors and ballerinas). Kantorowicz speaks of the many intellectuals who died of "disillusion" and "a broken heart" as a consequence of their disappointment with the reality they found in the East after their return from exile. Although he does not specifically mention Brecht in this context, it is becoming more and more evident that the rising of June 17th, 1953, and the shock of Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin produced symptoms of profound depression and listlessness in Brecht in the last years of his life.

Marianne Kesting's excellent collections of documents on Brecht's life in the Rowohlt series of paperback monographs on famous writers† give one or two items of new

* Alfred Kantorowicz: *Deutsches Tagebuch* (Munich, 1959).

† *Bertolt Brecht in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg, 1959).

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evidence. In the final years of his life, she says, Brecht cut himself off more and more from the outside world.

> Friends report his increasing physical lethargy. He more and more disliked leaving his home, made people come to see him whenever possible, and preferred to cover even distances of only fifty yards by car. He felt well only in closed rooms, where, in conversation and discussion he could erect his own world, or in the theatre, where he created his world on the stage. . . . However deeply he may have seen, one cannot help feeling that . . . up to a point, reality eluded him.

Marianne Kesting has also unearthed a further very important piece of evidence which helps to explain the reasons for Brecht's gradual withdrawal from reality. It is by now well known that after June 17th Brecht wrote a long letter to Ulbricht in which he criticised the régime, but of which only the last sentence expressing his loyalty to the party was ever published. Dr. Kesting now quotes a telegram to Ulbricht in which Brecht returned to the charge. It reads:

> ON THE MORNING OF THE 17TH JUNE, WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE WORKERS' DEMONSTRATIONS WERE BEING MISUSED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE WARMONGERS, I EXPRESSED MY ATTACHMENT TO THE S.E.D. NOW THAT THE PROVOCATEURS HAVE BEEN ISOLATED AND THEIR COMMUNICATIONS ARE BEING DESTROYED, I HOPE THAT THE WORKERS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN LEGITIMATE DISSATISFACTION WILL NOT BE PUT ON THE SAME LEVEL WITH THE PROVOCATEURS SO AS NOT TO INTERFERE IN ADVANCE WITH THE VERY NECESSARY DISCUSSION OF THE MISTAKES COMMITTED BY ALL CONCERNED.

This telegram was never published. It shows that in spite of his legendary caution and his resolute refusal ever to strike heroic attitudes, Brecht went very far in pointing out that the workers' rising was not (as the official line maintains to this day) the outcome only of "Western machinations," but an outburst of legitimate grievances of the masses. The disillusionment of a believer in the new epoch of Communism after the shock of a popular rising against the "workers' régime" is clearly visible in the few poems of that period that have been published up to now.* Marianne Kesting, however, draws her readers' attention to a passage in the "Notes to Galilei" published after his death, which may well be interpreted as a symptom of his disillusionment. "Terrible," Brecht writes,

> terrible is the disappointment, when human beings realise, or think they realise, that they have fallen victims to an illusion, that the old is stronger than the new, that the "facts" are against them and not for them, that their time, the new time has not yet come. Then things are not merely as bad as before, but much worse; for they have sacrificed a great deal for their plans, which they must now do without; they have ventured forward and now are being pushed back; the old takes its revenge. The scientist or discoverer, who was unknown but also unassailed before he had published his findings, becomes now that they are disproved or discredited, a swindler and a charlatan, and oh so notorious; the oppressed and exploited become, now that their revolt has been defeated, rebels who will be subjected to special oppression and punishment. The effort is followed by exhaustion, exaggerated hope by exaggerated hopelessness. Those who do not fall into resignation and apathy fall into worse: those who have not lost their idealistic energy now turn it against those same ideals. No reactionary is more cruel than a failed revolutionary, no elephant a more savage enemy of wild elephants than the tamed elephant.
>
> And yet, these disillusioned men may well be still living in a new age, the age of a great revolution. They only have become unaware of new eras. . . .

THESE words, like so much of Brecht's best writings, have a multiplicity of meanings. They may be explained as referring to Galileo and his contemporaries after the recantation: they might be seen as referring to the disillusionment of the Left after Hitler had come to power; but, as Marianne Kesting points out, they may equally well be read as referring to "the problem of a revolution that has become rigidified and its consequences, the overwhelming floodtide of restoration. . . ."

This interpretation may be correct, or again it may not. What is certain, however, is Brecht's delight in ambiguity and mischievous mystification. That is the quality which led him to express himself through characters like Herr Keuner, the hero of his moral fables, the rascally Judge Azdak in the *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, or the *Good Soldier Schweik*. No wonder that a writer as contradictory, ironical, and multidimensional as Brecht will forever exasperate and elude the politically faithful who live in a strictly one-dimensional world of predictable conditioned reflexes.

Martin Esslin

* These were referred to and quoted in previous notes on Brecht in ENCOUNTER, June 59 and Dec. 58.

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To an Aldermaston Marcher

DEAR *X*,

I am delighted to hear that you have arrived safely in London from Aldermaston, and, oddly enough, I find myself in agreement with much of what you had to say about the march. Certainly, it provided impressive evidence for the existence of "progressive and idealistic youth," as Mr. Sidney Silverman put it. Certainly it might be said to prove that no sane man is in favour of nuclear weapons (personally, I had never thought that any sane man had much liking for them). No doubt, it will give Messrs. Macmillan and Gaitskell to think. Whether it will similarly affect Mr. Khrushchev and President Eisenhower is another matter; in Britain we have a tendency to think that our moral gestures are of importance to the outside world, but there is little evidence to support this belief. However this may be, the fact remains that you and your fellows of the rank and file have tried to do something about a catastrophe that threatens us all. You have protested against a coming Armageddon. I applaud your zeal, and I admire your motives.

I hope therefore (but it is probably too much to hope) that I shall not be denounced as a cynical supporter of reaction, if I say that the results of your action may not be quite what you expect. There are certain questions you have not considered, certain problems your leaders have not posed. To begin with, let me say frankly that I think you would be better off without some of those leaders. As I have said before, the devotion of such excellent men as Canon Collins, Dr. Donald Soper, and Mr. Sidney Silverman to any progressive struggle that happens to be going seems to me positively harmful to the individual causes they espouse. There may be a certain logic in being simultaneously in the forefront of the battle against Apartheid, Capital Punishment, and the Bomb, but, after all, good causes are not vitamin tablets to be joined in the same capsule and swallowed in the same gulp. Moral indignation is not to be bought in large economy packets, and those who try to dispense it in this way open themselves to the suspicion of being more concerned with the profits of the operation than with the therapeutic qualities of the preparation they are recommending. I hope your leaders are equally interested in all the campaigns they organise, but I fancy they have forfeited their amateur status.

However, all this is of minor importance, though not without significance. What is more serious (and, indeed, crucial) is a failure to clarify the aims of the campaign in which you have been taking part. You will reply that its immediate object is to get Britain to give up its nuclear weapons, thereby saving money which might be put to better use, and also giving the world a moral example, which might lead to universal nuclear disarmament. And I should agree that there seems little point in our country possessing its own H-bomb and in pouring out money like water on missiles which are no sooner in production than obsolete. But can you stop there? We have heard a great deal about how, in the event of a nuclear war, Britain will be devastated and its population killed or sterilised, and, given its geographical position and its size, that is probably an accurate picture of what will happen. But simply giving up the bomb will not alter things one jot. If Britain is devastated, it will not be because it possesses its own nuclear deterrent, but because it is an ally of America in a war with Russia and because there are American bases here. And the question which I should like to put to the founders of the anti-nuclear campaign is: "Do they regard as one of their objectives a break with NATO and the American alliance?" For I take it that any hope that the Pentagon or the Kremlin will be suitably affected by a British renunciation of the bomb is chimerical.

Perhaps I am doing an injustice to your leaders: if Canon Collins' fiery oratory in Trafalgar Square has any meaning, it provides an answer to my question. "We in Britain are not going to have any more nuclear weapons or bases, or allies with nuclear weapons and bases." That is clear enough, and, though I shall quite understand if the Canon is disowned subsequently, I think I may take his words as some indication of what is behind the anti-nuclear campaign. What we are faced with is a campaign for the abandonment of NATO and the American alliance and for British neutrality in a possible conflict between America and Russia. That, as I have said, is clear, though it would be better were it to be stated openly. This policy means the end of present British alignments: the end of NATO, the end of close connections with the U.S.A., the end of the Western alliance in its present form.

Now it may be that these consequences of the anti-nuclear campaign are highly desirable, but I feel rather strongly that it would be as well if someone were to do a little thinking about them. For what is far from clear is where we go from there. What is to succeed the American alliance as the basis of British foreign policy? The logical thing would be a closer relationship to a Europe, which in time might become a neutral third force, but, since France has nuclear weapons, this presumably falls under the Canon's ban as well. What remains? A London-

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New Delhi axis? That would at least have the advantage of a division of labour; Mr Macmillan could soothe Mr. Khrushchev, while Mr. Nehru applied moral suasion to Mr. Chou En-lai. Or perhaps your mentors feel that Britain has no need of allies at all? And here, I think, we touch on one of their weaknesses. Do not some of the ideas lying behind the anti-nuclear campaign strike you as a little parochial, a little chauvinistic even? The view that Britain can quite cheerfully exist in a total isolation dictated by its disapproval of other people's possession of atomic weapons is in itself absurd and priggish, but it is something which could never have arisen even as a possibility had the anti-nuclear policy-makers had any real idea of the world outside these islands. To take one simple example, their programme implies a trust of Mr. Khrushchev's good intentions which may or may not be justified, but which contrasts very strangely with their evident unwillingness to extend even a tithe of the same indulgence to Dr. Adenauer, whose record is considerably better.

Do not misunderstand me. I feel just as strongly about the nuclear threat as anyone else. But since the way the Aldermaston marchers propose to deal with it involves a total change in present British foreign policy, I think it is fair to ask them what they are going to put in its place and to demand that it should be something more tangible than purity of heart.

I should like to think, my dear *X*, that these questions had occupied you on the road from Aldermaston and that you now have some idea of what you would like this country to do (rather than of what you would like it *not* to do). But I am afraid that the cameraderie of the bivouac and the cheerful euphoria of the march are not very conducive to thought. Mass movements are as much of a drug as cocaine and every bit as destructive of independent thinking. This might not matter so much but, unfortunately, some of your companions (fellow-travellers, should I call them?) are not as naïve as you. They know only too well what they want, and I am afraid that, for them, some nuclear powers are more nuclear than others. Now that you are away from the intoxication of the skiffle groups, you might give this and other matters your consideration. It is a harsh truth that in this world sincerity gets you nowhere, and that to arrive you must have some idea of where you want to go. In this sense the Aldermaston marchers have not even set out. Their progress is towards a void.

Wishing you, my dear *X*, a happy and, above all, a reflective year before your next march,

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Hartley

The Question of Imperialism

IT WOULD be an ungrateful author who questioned Professor Denis Brogan's extremely generous discussion [ENCOUNTER, May] of my recent book *The End of Empire*; it was, in fact, the most adequate discussion that the book has had in the British press. I am, however, glad to accept ENCOUNTER's invitation to make a few comments on, in particular, Professor Brogan's main criticism of the book. He points out that it almost completely omits to discuss Spanish America, as the prime example of "indirect imperialism"; of imperialism, that is to say, which, while it does not annex the territories in question, dominates them to a greater or lesser extent economically and politically. Professor Brogan's delightful instance of the parable of "The Mine" in Conrad's *Nostromo* shows how the process worked in South America.

There are several reasons why I virtually omitted Spanish America.

The first is, undoubtedly, "ignorance, Madam, sheer ignorance." The second is that there was already, in the opinion of most critics, and in my own opinion, too much rather than too little in the book. The book seemed to me doomed from the start if I attempted to summarise the histories of even the major instances of modern imperialist expansion. It seemed to me that I would only make something of it if I took one major example as an illustration and described that in some detail. For a variety of reasons, which I give, I took India.

What to leave out of a book of this kind is perplexing. For example, in an excellent review in *The Economist*, the critic ended up by saying that, as I was evidently writing a full-dress foreign policy for the Labour Party, it was outrageous that I had said almost nothing about Europe. Europe, he complained, might have been so much *tundra* so far as I was concerned. The criticism would have been fully justified had I had the slightest intention of writing a foreign policy for the Labour Party. The book's purpose was to discuss the consequences of the sudden, dramatic, and still only partially realised, revolution of our times, namely, the dissolution of the great colonial empires. Its purpose was to discuss those consequences, partly for the newly-liberated territories, but, above all (because this seemed to me the more neglected theme) for the ex-imperial powers themselves.

But, of course, it is perfectly true that our relationship with Western Europe is, in fact, bound up

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at a hundred points with the fact of the dissolution of our empire. Ideally, the one ought not to be considered without the other. The fact is that in this field of politics and economics, subjects have no boundaries and the student must simply draw a line somewhere, however arbitrarily, and stop there. The majority of critics have, I repeat, claimed that I chased too many, not too few, hares, while, naturally enough, saying that I ought to have chased their particular hare a great deal harder than I did.

On the third reason why I did not discuss Spanish America I do, however, take issue with Professor Brogan. He appears to suppose that I do not count as imperialism at all any form of domination which stops short of *de jure* annexation. This would indeed have been a gross over-simplification. But in fact I have devoted a whole chapter, No. XIII, to non-colonial empires in general. In it I attempt to deal with this whole issue of the extent to which a country can, in fact, become a colony without being formally annexed. Moreover, throughout the book I give examples of this very process. That is why I would not agree with Professor Brogan that the half-chapter I devote to Egypt is an excursus inessential to the argument. On the contrary, the Egypt of Cromer's day was precisely a "semi-colony" in the Leninist sense. This particular example was very near to being a full colony. British rule was indirect but very complete. There are many gradations in this concept of the semi-colony. For example, the Argentine has throughout been far more independent of both America and Britain than Egypt was of Britain. Nevertheless I agree with Professor Brogan that it would be wrong to say that the Argentine had been, during the whole period between the liberation and recent years, a fully independent country.

To my mind, the essence of the question is economic. Unless a *de jure* independent country can make use of its independence for self-development, it is almost bound to drift back into one form or other of imperialist subjection. And I do apply this concept specifically to Spanish America on page 202:

> Latin America, as a whole, over more than 100 years, derived very little benefit from her liberation from Spain. The governments of the successor states proved, on the whole, incapable of making use of their freedom. Of course there was some development, but most of the states tended to drift into the economic control of either America, or Britain, or simply of the developed world as a whole. They remained in Myrdal's phrase "bare and defenceless to the play of market forces." (It is only in the last fifteen years that they have really begun an independent development. But now in some cases they have. Mexico, in particular, is developing as fast or faster than any other country in the world, and Brazil, the potential great power amongst them, is evidently on the move.) Whether this state of things ought to be called "the continuance of imperialism by other means" is largely a terminological question. When there is direct, even if intermittent, interference by military force, such as the United States has periodically undertaken in Central America, an element of imperialism, within the sense used in these pages, is clearly involved. But when it is simply a question of the local government being incapable of taking the measures of interference with "the free flow of international trade" necessary to the development of its country, even though no one is preventing it from doing so, it seems better to say simply that even national independence is no good unless it is used.

Moreover, I agree with Professor Brogan that semi-colonies often get the worst of both worlds. There was a lot to be said for a country passing, during the great imperialist phase of the past 200 years, under the direct rule of a large and competent empire.

THIS WAS BROUGHT HOME TO ME in a recent visit to Persia. The Persians felt (and largely still feel) almost as fully dominated as India did during the period of British rule. And they were surely right to do so. The dozen or so British Consuls-General, scattered over the country, were each accompanied by a troop of lancers, held a legal court of their own, and were far from susceptible to the writ of the Persian Government. But because Persia was not nominally a British colony, nothing remotely equivalent to the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Army was established. The Persians, even to-day, feel, it seemed to me, impotent under the domination, now of America rather than Britain—but anyhow of the West in general. For they are bereft of those organs of administration and national life which any well-run colony has developed during its period of subjection.

On the other hand, there are examples which work the other way. Mexico, in Latin America, is surely the prime one. After a long and apparently hopeless period of bogus independence, the fact that there was no actual foreign occupation was used by revolutionary forces to start the long but indispensable process of economic development. And the Mexicans are succeeding.

I am well aware that in my book I have done no more than break the surface of these immensely important, but extremely difficult, fields of study. But of one thing I am convinced, and I was delighted that Professor Brogan implied his agreement in this: future scholars will simply make nothing of this field unless they first master, digest, and then at least partially reject, the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism. Alternatively if they cannot bring themselves to stain their reputations (as they undoubtedly will) by so doing, they can simply master Professor Myrdal's alternative and completely independent version of the same basic economic considerations.

John Strachey

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BOOKS & WRITERS

F. Scott Fitzgerald

By Dan Jacobson

For many years now Scott Fitzgerald's reputation has stood consistently high: too high, one is inclined to feel at times, considering on the one hand the kind of praise which is regularly evoked by his work from critics and reviewers; and considering too, on the other hand, the very small quantity of writing to which this praise can justly be applied. One cannot help suspecting that some of the praise is still being given to Fitzgerald by way of recompense, to make up to him for the neglect from which he suffered in the later years of his life: in any case, his high critical reputation has ensured that his life and work are continually kept before us. Just in the last year there have been several reprints of works by Fitzgerald, the most notable among them being the two volumes of *The Bodley Head Fitzgerald*,[1] which have brought together practically all the writings for which Fitzgerald is chiefly remembered. We have had, too, *Afternoon of an Author*,[2] edited by Arthur Mizener, which contains a group of hitherto uncollected articles and stories by Fitzgerald; and it is not so long ago that Professor Mizener's excellent biography, originally published under the title of *The Far Side of Paradise* was re-issued as *F. Scott Fitzgerald: a Biographical and Critical Study*.[3] There has also been *Beloved Infidel*[4] by Sheilah Graham and Gerold Frank, which is a reminiscence of the years Miss Graham spent with Fitzgerald; and this last book has been made into an atrocious film. When Scott Fitzgerald died (in 1940) not a single one of his works was in print; now his life and death are being hideously travestied in our local picture palaces, with Gregory Peck in the leading role.

The disengagement of a writer's life from his work is always a delicate and difficult business, and in Fitzgerald's case the difficulty is notorious. His life was an extreme one, not least in the pain he endured; and we cannot absolve ourselves of our responsibility for it by saying that his pain was self-inflicted. Suffering of Fitzgerald's kind is always self-inflicted, and society is always responsible for it. Nevertheless, one must feel sufficiently free of guilt not only to respect, admire, and pity Fitzgerald, but also to confess to the irritation one feels with him. And one is irritated with him not because he spent his money unwisely, or did unforgiveable things when he was drunk, or because he was drunk so often; but because he so often betrayed himself and his best insights; because he tried so hard to bluff himself about what he was doing. He never really succeeded in bluffing himself: if he had succeeded he would not have been either pitiable or admirable at all, and it is quite possible that then he would have been a happier man. Fitzgerald was never taken in; but how hard he tried to be, and how often the attempt mars his own best work!

Fitzgerald was a man with the most strenuous social appetites; and much of his work is a statement of the intellectual and moral cost of attempting to gratify these appetites. For reasons to do no doubt with his own psychological make-up, and to do certainly with the country and time in which he was born, the attempt on Fitzgerald's part to gratify his own social hungers was never unaccompanied by guilt and anxiety, was never less than exhausting; and in book after book, and essay after essay, he sought earnestly and hopelessly to imagine a way of life which would seem glamorous and graceful and free enough to warrant something of the energy he had himself expended in his pursuit of glamour, grace, and freedom. Only in one book did Fitzgerald face up to the possibility that for him and for his characters there was *no* way of life commensurate with his own ambitions and theirs; that

[1] The Bodley Head (20s. each).
[2] The Bodley Head (16s.).
[3] Eyre & Spottiswoode (8s. 6d.).
[4] Cassell (21s.).

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the richness of his life and theirs was in the appetites themselves, and not in the objects of appetite. In his other work, driven as he was by a fear that his own struggles would be meaningless and futile unless he could, as it were, show something for them, Fitzgerald was again and again forced to try to pass off the inferior for what it wasn't; or else to gesture towards the genuinely superior, in spite of the fact that his art could not depict it.

We can clearly see him doing both in the very beginning of his last completed novel, the book on which he spent years of labour under extremely bitter conditions. *Tender is the Night* opens with an admirable description of the heat and colour and languor of a Riviera beach. Through the eyes of a young girl we are introduced to two groups on the beach: one group the girl finds very attractive, the other she dislikes. Eventually, she joins the group to which she is attracted, and listens to their conversation, which consists of some modish talk, a few catty remarks about others on the beach, and the description of a practical joke (the kidnapping of a waiter). Later we see another practical joke (one of the men appears wearing flesh-coloured bathing trunks), and then the party goes for a swim:

> Simultaneously the whole party moved towards the water, super-ready from the long forced inaction, passing from the heat to the cool with the *gourmandise* of a tingling curry eaten with chilled white wine. The Divers' day was spaced like the day of the older civilisation to yield the utmost from the materials at hand, and to give all their transitions their full value. . . .

A little later a warning note is struck:

> (Rosemary's) naïveté responded wholeheartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was a selection of quality rather than quantity from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behaviour also, the nursery-like peace and goodwill, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles she could not have guessed at.

One's only reaction can be surprise and incredulity: whom is Fitzgerald trying to deceive? There is nothing that has been said or done by anyone on the beach which warrants a single one of the words the author is using about the group—and it is worth noting too that many of the words are themselves without any distinction at all. Still, even if one takes them at the value the writer is trying to give to them, where is the *"gourmandise,"* the "day of the older civilisation," the "simplicity," "peace," and "goodwill" in what has been shown to us? Yet this, Fitzgerald assures us, is *it*, the real thing: "At that moment the Divers represented externally the exact furthermost evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them." One is embarrassed by his fervour, by his anxiety to talk himself into believing what he is saying.

BUT REALLY THE AUTHOR had given his own game away even earlier. It was Fitzgerald's stated intention to have as the background of the novel "the leisure class . . . at their truly most brilliant and glamorous." How little faith he had in his own ability to realise this brilliance and glamour is shown up clearly by the fact that he chose to present the Divers to us—on the beach which they had made fashionable, surrounded by their closest friends, at high summer—through the eyes of Rosemary Hoyt, who is seventeen years old and falls in love with Dick Diver. Why should we take *her* word for anything? But this is just what Fitzgerald wants us to do; he wants us to be as dazzled by the Divers as Rosemary is. Of course he does at the same time warn us that there is much about these people which Rosemary cannot see; nevertheless, the author is trying here to evade responsibilities which are his, and not Rosemary's; and we feel the evasiveness of the tactic even more strongly when we see how little use is subsequently made of the girl. One may as well add that this same sleight of hand was tried again by Fitzgerald in *The Last Tycoon*, the much-praised and unfinished novel he was working on at the time of his death. There too we first see the hero, Stahr, the Diver-figure, through the eyes of a college-girl who is in love with him, and again we are clearly intended to take the college-girl's word for our own evaluation of Stahr. Again, if we have any self-respect, we do no such thing.

Now it must be emphasised that *Tender is the Night* does not rest at Rosemary's first impression of the Divers: it is supposed to be an exploration of the "complexity" of which the author has warned us. But unless we believe in the Divers' initial grace, brilliance, and suppleness (even though they are "external"), we are unlikely to find Dick Diver's story nearly as significant as Fitzgerald wants it to be. There is much in *Tender is the Night* which is moving and memorable: the decline of Diver, particularly, is beautifully done, despite the fact that we are never sure exactly what it is he is supposed to be declining from. Diver's increasing moodiness, his failures of tact, his drinking, his outbursts of irascibility, are what they are supposed to be, the surrender of a personality to its own most inferior elements; and the sur-

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render is described intensely from within, yet judged simultaneously from without, by a fine exactitude of the understanding. There is, also, a genuine nobility in the attempt which is made to understand and describe the sufferings of the mentally sick whom Diver treats: one remembers especially the schizophrenic woman, bandaged and helpless, the prey to hideous hallucinations, who herself tells Diver that "There must be a reason for all this suffering"; one remembers, too, Diver's silence, his inability to answer her. This is not to say that we believe at all in Diver as a potentially great psychologist gone to seed: that belongs too to the unsuccessful part of the book. The unsuccessful part of the book, in fact, is most of what is supposed to be positive in it: the grace of the Divers' life, the intelligence which is at work within the grace and which is eventually sacrificed for it.

AND what is said here about *Tender is the Night* can be extended, by implication, to most of Fitzgerald's work, from *The Beautiful and Damned* onwards. In that early novel Fitzgerald's attempts to imagine a life of elegance and ease and irresponsibility are obviously at war with his own deeper and more serious wish, which seems scarcely confessed even to himself, to tell some kind of truth about marriage. At its worst the Fitzgerald hunger for glamour and prestige could lead to a passage like this, from an essay called *My Lost City*—

> The first speak-easies had arrived, the toddle was *passé*, the Montmartre was the smart place to dance and Lillian Tashman's fair hair weaved around the floor among the enliquored college boys. The plays were *Declassée* and *Sacred and Profane Love*, and at the Midnight Frolic you danced elbow-to-elbow with Marion Davies and perhaps picked out the vivacious Mary Hay in the pony chorus. . . .

This is the language, and the life, one feels, of some third-rate BBC programme telling us that "Those Were the Days" or "The Lights Still Shine in Piccadilly" or whatever it is that those programmes are called; and yet it is about just this life that in the same essay Fitzgerald assures us, "I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again."

I want to repeat here my conviction that when Fitzgerald was dancing among the "enliquored college boys" he did *not* have "everything he wanted"—that, rather, is something Fitzgerald would have liked to believe about himself, but never could. And when we turn to the work he was busy on at the time of his death, we can see how much further Fitzgerald could go in trying to imagine for himself a desirable life. What makes Stahr of *The Last Tycoon* heroic in

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Fitzgerald's eyes is clearly the fact that his is a working life: Stahr is involved, as all Fitzgerald's heroes are, with beauty, money, and the manipulation of others for their own greater good, but these gifts or activities are all bent by Stahr to a single purpose. It is, of course, ironic and significant that the purpose is to make illusions, to make motion pictures; but the intention of the book is obviously to present Stahr not only as the last tycoon he is declared to be in its title, but also as a type of the artist. The artist and the business man are supposed to be antithetical figures, and in making the attempt to weld them into one Fitzgerald's ambition was as great here as it was in anything else he ever wrote. (And one should note in passing that it is hardly surprising that Fitzgerald himself should have ended up in Hollywood. Being the kind of man and artist he was, he was drawn inevitably towards it, and the attraction is evident as early as *The Beautiful and Damned*. Certainly he understood far earlier than most, perhaps because of his own attraction, what Hollywood was to become in the life of the nation and the world.)

He failed, however, with his tycoon-artist, just as he had failed earlier with Dick Diver to make meaningful and credible the interaction between the worlds of high fashion and profound intellect. We do not believe in Stahr, and I have already suggested that Fitzgerald's fundamental doubt about his own ability to depict the man is shown up by his use as narrator of the girl Celia, who is to Stahr what Rosemary was to Dick Diver. And the various other attempts made to inflate Stahr are sometimes dismaying in their crudity—there are, for example, the episodes involving Boxley, the English writer, who is shown as being contemptuous of all film-making, who is spoken to by Stahr, and who under Stahr's tuition subsequently takes over a writers' conference, having been made a new man by the words Stahr has said to him.

Obviously, it is unfair to criticise *The Last Tycoon* in this way, when Fitzgerald still had so much work to do on it; and I would not make the criticism if it did not seem to me that others have greatly over-praised the fragment which is all any of us have. I agree, certainly, that the fragment does have some notable strengths—the picture of Hollywood as a place where people actually live is unsurpassed; the natural aspect of California is beautifully, though fugitively, described; so too is the California of the boulevards and bungalows, the beaches and half-finished houses, drug-stores and parked cars; the love between Stahr and Kathleen is presented with all Fitzgerald's particularly effective wistfulness. And I agree, too, that for all the faults there are in his presentation, Stahr—who is a real aristocrat in a sense that none of Fitzgerald's other heroes are, for Stahr actually rules a kingdom of a kind—is the closest Fitzgerald ever came to making an adult embodiment of what he hoped or desired for himself and his society.

Nevertheless, it remains true, I believe, that all Fitzgerald's attempts at such an embodiment were failures, and marred each of his works, save for *The Great Gatsby*. *The Great Gatsby* is Fitzgerald's finest work precisely because in it he did not make any similar attempt.

The world of money and leisure and glamour in *The Great Gatsby* is represented by Tom Buchanan, his wife Daisy, and Daisy's friend, Jordan Baker. To their wealth they add sporting prowess, which was always of curious importance to Fitzgerald: Tom was "one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven—a national figure in a way"; and Jordan Baker is a champion golfer. They live in immense style, having "come East in a way that took your breath away"; but for once, in describing their way of life, Fitzgerald's breath isn't taken away. The following passage, for example, may be compared with the quotation from *Tender is the Night* describing the Divers on the Riviera—this extract describes the narrator's entry into Tom Buchanan's house, and in its fluency and ease and freshness it is clearly superior to the other:

> We walked through a high hallway into a bright rose-coloured space, fragilely bound into the house by french windows at either end . . . . A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up towards the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-coloured rug, making a shadow on it as the wind does on the sea.
>
> The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as though they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows, and the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

Throughout the book the Buchanans are seen as being as much a part of their own expensive surroundings as the concluding phrases of the last sentence would suggest; and throughout they are described with the same rather contemptuous coolness. Because Fitzgerald makes

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it very plain, early in the book, that they are all contemptible people, without exception—Tom Buchanan with his crackpot racial theories and his vulgar amours; Jordan Baker who tells lies as a matter of course; even Daisy, with her beautiful voice, about which the narrator remarks, at their first meeting: "The instant (it) broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had just said." And as the book develops, these dishonesties and vulgarities develop too, until we see Daisy conspiring with her husband to use Gatsby's love for her as a means of hiding her own guilt in the hit-and-run killing of Myrtle Wilson; until we see Tom Buchanan deliberately conniving at what he knows will be the murder of Gatsby. There is no suggestion anywhere in the book that this leisure class is "truly brilliant and glamorous"; the members of this class lead lives that are at best commonplace and at worst sinister in a way that they themselves are too stupid to realise.

However, *The Great Gatsby* is very much more than an "exposure," or a turning of the author upon himself. All Fitzgerald's longing, nostalgia, wistfulness, all of what I have called his hungers, are as much in this book as in any of his others: indeed, even more so. But now Fitzgerald does not exert himself in trying to make the object worthy of the hunger felt for it: that, as I have shown, is described as ash, as Dead Sea fruit. No, the true emotional centre of the book is now in the hunger itself: Fitzgerald's longing and yearning appear as themselves, and their weight is their own: their weight is that of the character of Gatsby himself. In this respect, at least, Gatsby is treated without irony: the book certainly uses Gatsby's hope, his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life," for a profoundly ironic purpose; but Gatsby's "sensitivity" could not have been used for that purpose if it had not been given the respect and admiration which Fitzgerald obviously feels for it, and which he persuades us it deserves. Gatsby is described as a man "with an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall find again"; and when Gatsby at last meets Daisy again, after five years of waiting for her, the respect is made even more explicit. "There must have been moments that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams, not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that floated his way. No amount of fire or freshness," the narrator con-

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ATLANTIC BOOKS

STEVENS

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tinues, and he speaks for his creator too, who is analysing here his own case, "can challenge what a man can store up in his own ghostly heart."

To WHAT EXTENT Daisy does tumble short of Gatsby's dreams the rest of the book reveals to us; and it is in this way that the central irony of the book develops. "They're a rotten crowd," the narrator shouts at Gatsby across the lawn, the last time he sees him. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together." And though he adds that "It was the only compliment I ever gave (Gatsby), because I disapproved of him from beginning to end," the "disapproval" merely adds to the force of the compliment. It is, of course, part of the irony that Gatsby, in his attempt to realise his "incorruptible dream," should take to activities of a criminal nature—bootlegging, gambling, and, it is suggested more than once, murder. But the actual killers in the book, let it be noted, are Daisy and Tom Buchanan, though Daisy shrinks away from Gatsby when she is told about his past. Again, Gatsby may have a "gonnegtion" with Meyer Wolfsheim, who "fixed the World Series of 1919"; but about Jordan Baker, Daisy's best friend, the narrator remembers that "at her first big tournament there was a row that nearly reached the newspapers—a suggestion that she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round. The thing approached the proportions of a scandal—then died away. . . ." And so, throughout the book, the parallels are drawn, the connections are made, with a tightness, an unobtrusiveness, and an intelligence that are the mark of a liberated mind on the part of the creator: liberated because he is able to see himself for what he is, without hatred and without mercy; and to make of his own hatreds and mercies something that is no longer dependent upon himself for its life.

If the viciousness of the Buchanans is shown up against the "incorruptibility" of Gatsby's dream, which has a nobility they cannot imagine; so, simultaneously, working in the other direction, Gatsby's dream is placed, tragically, not only by the means he has used to realise it, but by the fact that it is precisely around these wretched Buchanans that the dream coheres, it is towards them that it aspires. Tragic is a large word to use about so slender a book as *The Great Gatsby*, but I think it deserves it, if only because of the last great connection made in the book; the connection between Gatsby and the country which had given him his birth. Fitzgerald's sense of history was acute (one of the finest scenes in *Tender is the Night* is that in which Dick Diver visits the trenches, "where a century of bourgeois love died"); and in Jay Gatsby Fitzgerald knew that he had created a character whose significance was not less than national. The passage with which the book concludes is so well known that one feels hesitant in quoting it, yet I cannot refrain from doing so—and not only because it illustrates so vividly and fully Gatsby's national or "mythic"[5] aspect. At the end of *The Great Gatsby* the narrator stands outside Gatsby's mansion, and has a vision of "the old island which flowered once for the Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh green breast of the new world."

> Its vanished trees [he continues], the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an æsthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his own capacity for wonder.
>
> And as I sat there brooding on the old unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.
>
> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—
>
> So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

The reader will surely have noticed the relevance of the entire quotation given above to the central argument or suggestion of this essay. In writing of the character of Gatsby and his country in this way Fitzgerald was writing too of himself; and only in this way did he succeed in doing himself full justice.

There are, it is true, certain criticisms to be advanced against the book, and in one of his letters Fitzgerald made perhaps the most important of these—that we are not told what happened between Daisy and Gatsby after their reunion and before the climax of the book. I would also say that we are not told enough about Daisy's background when Gatsby meets her for the very first time and falls forever in love with her; nor enough about how Gatsby has made the money which he feels he needs

[5] The word is used by Mr. Marius Bewley in his extremely interesting essay on Fitzgerald in *The Eccentric Design* (Chatto, 1959).

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before he can approach her again. It has been said that a novelist can withhold knowledge which he knows, and he can withhold knowledge which he does not know; and too often we feel that Fitzgerald's withholding in *The Great Gatsby* is of the second kind. However, I must say that none of these criticisms seem to me of any great significance. To speak quite simply, I would say that of all the American novels written since the First World War, which I have read, *The Great Gatsby* is the one I have read and re-read most often, and with the greatest pleasure.

FINALLY, there is one other aspect of Fitzgerald's achievement which must be mentioned. I think that any visitor to the United States must be surprised to find how curiously "unwritten about" so much of the country seems to him, especially considering the great number of modern American novels which are continually being put out, and how many of these are little more than extended pieces of reportage. But to make any important feature of a country truly recognisable, one needs to do more than describe accurately particular physical appearances, or manners, voices, ways of speech; for the details of these things are somehow weightless and incoherent unless they are allied to a passionate preoccupation with the social depths which the details both reflect and imply. Fitzgerald's eye and ear were acute, and when he was fully engaged by his subject, as in *The Great Gatsby*, he was able fully to project his perceptions, in a way which, more than that of any other modern American novelist, made of the United States a country that not only is, but can be seen to be, a place of continuing habitation. Fitzgerald could not live in it, but others can, with greater understanding of themselves, because he tried to.

Imaginary Sociology

The Sociological Imagination. By C. WRIGHT MILLS. *Oxford University Press.* 36s.

IMAGINE a burly cowpuncher on the long, slow ride from the Panhandle of Texas to Columbia University, carrying in his saddle-bag some books which he reads with absorption while his horse trots along. Imagine that among the books are some novels of Kafka, Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, and the essays of Max Weber. Imagine the style and imagery that would result from the interaction of the cowboy-student and his studies. Imagine also that *en route* he passes through Madison, Wisconsin, that seat of a decaying populism and

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that, on arriving at his destination in New York, he encounters Madison Avenue, that street full of reeking phantasies of the manipulation of the human will and of what is painful to America's well-wishers and enjoyable to its detractors. Imagine the first Macison disclosing to the learned cowpuncher his subsequent political mode, the second an object of his hatred.

The end result of such an imaginary grand tour would be a work like *The Sociological Imagination*. In this book, Professor C. Wright Mills settles his score with contemporary American sociology—which for better or for worse is sociology, *tout court*, over the world to-day—and holds up a task for sociologists as the begetters of a critical understanding of the struggle for power within and among nations to-day, and its ramification into our daily lives.

Professor Mills is utterly fed up with research which is based on field-work and which exercises some statistical control over its collection and analysis of data. His objections are not the usual ones, *e.g.*, that it would deny man's dignity as an individual—he has his own way of doing that. Rather, he criticises what he designates as "abstracted empiricism" because it does not deal with the two major facts of contemporary society, namely, man's sense of being trapped and the bureaucratic concentration of power from which the feeling of entrapment arises. In the course of his critique, he makes some shrewd observations about the limitations of this kind of research and the ethos of some of its practitioners. He also lets "grand theory" have a few bursts from his Buntline Special as he canters past. He easily shoots off the Emett-like fretwork of Professor Talcott Parsons' style —a notoriously easy target—but where a steadier aim and a better discernment of the target is necessary, his performance is not so very creditable.

What does this solitary horseman—who is in part a prophet, in part a scholar, and in part a rough-tongued brawler—a sort of Joe McCarthy of sociology, full of wild accusations and gross inaccuracies, bullying manners, harsh words, and shifting grounds—want of sociology? His contempt for the painstakingness of "empiricism," "abstracted" from the power-struggles of our time, and for the abstract constructions of sociological theory is integral to his impatient demand that sociology should become the guide and beacon of the age. Professor Mills thinks that sociology is called by educated opinion, and the vacuum of the present cultural and political situation, to take the forefront of intellectual life. Journalism, literature, and art must make room for sociology, perhaps even become sociology, because only it is capable of depicting what is really important.

> What fiction, what journalism, what artistic endeavour can compete with the historical reality and the political facts of our time? What dramatic vision of hell can compete with the events of 20th-century war? What moral denunciation can measure up to the moral insensibility of men in the agonies of primary accumulation? It is social and historical reality that men want to know and often they do not find contemporary literature an adequate means for knowing it. They yearn for facts, they search for their meanings, they want a "big picture" in which they can believe and in which they can come to understand themselves. They want orienting values too, and suitable ways of feeling and styles of emotion and vocabularies of motive. And they do not find these in the literature of to-day. . . .

And further,

> In the absence of an adequate social science, critics and novelists, dramatists and poets have been the only major and often the only formulators of private troubles and even of public issues. Art does express such feeling . . . but still not with the intellectual clarity required for their understanding or relief to-day.

LET US DISREGARD the specific contents of Professor Mills' "big picture" of contemporary society (which has little except its grandiose scale and its rhetorical vigour to recommend it) and ask whether sociology is in a position to fulfil the responsibilities he lays upon it.

Our understanding of ourselves and our society to-day is certainly very imperfect, and it has always been. There is an intellectual need for sociological observation and for a more general sociological understanding. Not that the world will perish without it or survive because of it, but because, in kernel, sociology seems to possess the potentiality for doing intellectual justice to the larger trends of society. It certainly cannot do so at present, and the substantive views which Professor Mills offers as a picture of the world we live in are as misleadingly off the mark as the compound of sophisticated Marxism, preoccupation with mass communications, and the tendency to regard the history of Germany in the 'twenties and 'thirties as proto-typical of the conditions and prospects of Western society, can be. There is not enough intellectual achievement in the sociological "diagnosis of our time" to allow it even to pretend to replace journalism, literature, art, etc., as interpretations of the contemporary situation, quite aside from the ultimate impossibility of its ever performing the expressive functions of these activities. Even if sociology as an academic discipline had already mastered the main outlines of the nature of our contemporary societies, its continuous application would need a great

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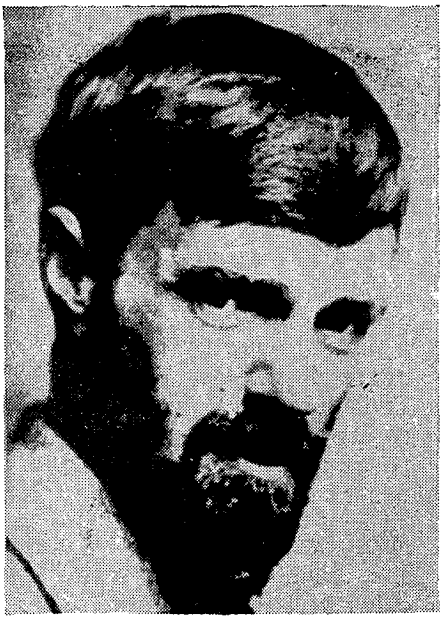

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vision and a powerful intelligence. Max Weber was such a mind and personality but he died forty years ago and his views are scarcely up-to-date. Among contemporary sociologists only Professor Raymond Aron possesses the gifts which approximate Professor Mills' demands, and I doubt whether Professor Mills regards his sociology as the truthful kind. In any case, he does not mention him among the tiny handful who seem to meet his standards. The fact is that in sociology as it exists to-day, in Professor Mills' kind of sociology no more than in that which he derogates—there is not available to instructed public opinion a reasonable picture of things as they really are. It would be fraudulent to claim that there is one.

What sociology can offer is a model of sobriety and openness of mind—yet how few existing sociologists possess these qualities—and a way of looking at things. Professor Mills will allow no credit to these when they assume the form of meticulous research based on careful sympathetic interviewing and first-hand observation. For him this can only result in abstraction from the power-impelled realities of our time, and a loss of perspective because of preoccupation with small "milieux." Nonetheless, if we think of the books which give us some sense of what is going on in the society around us, enquiries like Michael Young's (and his collaborators), William Whyte's, John Dollard's, and other *Middletown*-like works come to mind. These are books which widen our range of imagination, and here and there, in spots, rid us of the clichés inherited from political prejudices, cultural snobbery, and apocalyptic expectations. But even such studies and others, using even more precise techniques, are not immune to the deformations of ideology and unreflective prejudice. Moreover, they leave a large part of the area of modern society unmapped.

The best that the best of sociology can provide is a training of circumspection and imagination. Professor Mills will not have the former and he does not tell us what the latter is except to say repeatedly that it is the state of mind which will produce the results at which he himself has already arrived, through its use.

It would, however, be a pity if the slipshod exhortations and denunciations which make up Professor Mills' arguments for *The Sociological Imagination* were to pass unappreciated. The sociological imagination is not an inevitably empty phrase. It could be that matrix of "personal knowledge" of society, formed from the experience of life, from historical study, from meticulously controlled observation at first-hand, and systematic reflection on the essential elements of human action and social structure, from the study of the classics of political philosophy, com-

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parative religion, social anthropology, economic and sociological theory, and the descriptive literature of these subjects. It could provide an open pattern of thought, a realistic sensibility which could give guidance to our cognitive response to society. It could be a general set of pointers indicating the significant aspects of situations, the range of possibilities, and within that range, what is more likely and what is less likely to occur. The present achievements of sociology are technical and particular, abstract and rigid. A properly cultivated sociological imagination would be supple, easily accessible to the concrete, and it would transcend the particular. If that were developed, then sociology would be in a better position to reform the use of its elaborate techniques and to improve its systematic theory. It could then legitimately aspire to a major place in the enlightened opinion of those who are not professional sociologists.

For the time being, that properly cultivated sociological sensibility exists only very incipiently and its further growth will take time, patience, intelligence, intellectual honesty, and sympathetic curiosity. At present these are excessively scarce, in a domain full of aspiration and of little-used opportunities for achievement.

Edward Shils

Aesthetic Bliss

Bend Sinister. By VLADIMIR NABOKOV. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson.* 15s.

Breakdown. By JOHN BRATBY. *Hutchinson.* 25s.

Ritual in the Dark. By COLIN WILSON. *Gollancz.* 18s.

IF THIS were a very pure review it would deal only with the first of these books; but there is something to be said for an arrangement which illustrates the strong antipathy of good for bad, even if it means that *Bend Sinister* will get only nine-tenths of the space.

Mr. Nabokov is a major novelist; the proof of this exists, but is only gradually becoming available, as the old novels are released in Britain. Probably he will not be greatly loved; the personality that presides over his work is not amiable. We do not much care to be the objects of an author's contempt, and—to simplify for a moment—that is the way Nabokov seems to feel about us. It is not very common for a man of really overpowering intelligence to write novels; and, especially if he is also an impatient man, he is likely, when he does so, to encounter special problems. The medium itself may irk him, because of its associations with base entertainment, and because it traditionally encourages the reader to "identify" with its characters. The reader is even more of a problem. A kind of thinking, and the pleasure that accompanies it, no longer go on in happy privacy but have to be made available to others, some or many of whom have no hope of understanding and experiencing them. The novel insults the intelligence of its author; and the author thinks of his reader as being morally deaf, like the boarding-house keeper in Mr. Pinter's play, who is so committed to the belief that what goes on is nice that she hardly registers an attempt to strangle her.

In his apologia for *Lolita* Nabokov tosses us an æsthetic:

> For me the work of fiction exists only in so far as it affords me what I shall bluntly call æsthetic bliss; that is, a sense of being somehow, somewhere, connected with other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm. There are not many such books. All the rest is topical trash coming in huge blocks of plaster that are carefully transmitted from age to age until someone comes along with a hammer and take a good crack at Balzac, at Gorki, at Mann.

This is loosely expressed, and not extraordinary anyway, but we note "affords *me*"; also "states of being" which suggests that others can participate in the bliss. (The strange inclusion of "curiosity" as a gloss on "art" helps, by the way, to explain the association in Nabokov of passionate excitement with flourishes of recondite learning.) The list of plaster-novelists—in which he would also place Conrad—is more interesting. The novel is too easy. It can be stuffed with facts or doctrine, a photograph or a tract; or it can be laboriously moulded to the shape of some moralistic obsession. Nabokov finds all this contemptible and an obstacle to æsthetic bliss. And that is why his fiction is uniformly fantastic; everything in it is a kind of joke. He uses a hot-house prose, its improbable loops and blooms are themselves a mockery of prevailing narrative styles; when it moves briskly it is with an effect of farce, when it is fine it parodies itself. The moral *données* of the novels are absurdly ambiguous, hence our slow bewilderment with *Lolita*. Humbert displays great delicacy, is disgusted with visitors whose modesty won't allow them to flush the lavatory, or with Quilty's phoney British accent and the "thick gore" that comes from him as the bullets sink in; but this delicacy will not survive Lolita's delicious crumbiness. The nastiness *we* are likely to sense vulgarly in the affair with the girl is transferred, with a show of fastidious indignation, to behaviour *we* very probably approve: "There is nothing wrong, say both hemispheres, when a

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brute of forty, blessed by the local priest and bloated with drink, sheds his sweat-drenched finery and thrusts himself up to the hilt into his youthful bride." Humbert is not a brute, nor forty, nor drunk or dirty or married. He is, like his creator's novels, morally isolated in the interests of bliss. And although the treatment of "normal" relationships is disgusted or farcical, this isolation is unavoidably tragic. Nabokov's genre is, in fact, tragic farce. There is here a slight resemblance to Graham Greene, who also has the power to see through a joke into an abyss; but a much stronger resemblance to Sterne.

In *Bend Sinister* this is very strong, partly because of a coincidence of theme; for *Bend Sinister* treats, as Sterne did, of a "clash between the world of learning and that of human affairs" (Douglas Jefferson). The hero is a famous philosopher called Adam Krug, a somewhat Nabokov-like man with an easy conviction of his own superior powers. This survives his grief at the death of his wife and blinds him to danger threatening himself and his young son; for the new régime, the dictatorship of the Average Man, is the instrument of a wretched fellow he had bullied at school; and since the policy and the personnel of the Government are alike contemptible he cannot take them seriously. His son becomes the victim of cruelty as careless as it is frightful, his friends are removed by stupid and dirty police; finding himself once more in the school-yard with his old enemy Paduk, the head of the state, he tries and (unlike Humbert) fails to murder the lout who has broken his life and his mind. He is a tragic Shandy; the fate of his son is a consequence of an obsession with intellect, the habit of expecting matters to fall out in accordance with intelligent prediction, just as his father's preoccupation with book-learning, and the obsessive researches of Uncle Toby, brought disaster to Tristram. The difference between Sterne's comedy and Nabokov's tragedy is simply that the hard facts upon which the Shandys bruise themselves are orderly and to be respected; whereas Krug's victors are aimless and banal, and their policy the corruption of a philosophy.

This material difference does not detract from the impressive linguistic and formal resemblances between Nabokov and Sterne. Both, for example, use scientific language for farce:

> The strong, compact, dusky forehead had that peculiar hermetic aspect (a bank safe? a prison wall?) which the brows of thinkers possess. The brain consisted of water, various chemical compounds, and a group of highly specialised fats. The pale steely eyes were half-closed in their squarish orbits under the shaggy eyebrows which had protected them once from the poisonous

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droppings of extinct birds—Schneider's hypothesis. The ears were of goodly size with hair inside. Two deep folds of flesh diverged from the nose along the large cheeks. The morning had been shaveless. He wore a badly-creased dark suit and a bow tie, always the same, hyssop violet with (pure white in the type here, Isabella) interneural macules and a crippled left hindwing. *Etc.*

My father, who dipped into all kinds of books, upon looking into *Lithopaedus Senonensis de Partu difficili*, published by *Adrianus Smelvgot*, had found out, that the lax and pliable state of a child's head in parturition, the bones of the cranium having no sutures at that time, was such, — that by force of the woman's efforts, which, in strong labour-pains, was equal, upon an average, to the weight of 470 pounds averdupois acting perpendicularly upon it; — it so happened, that in 49 instances out of 50, the said head was compressed and moulded into the shape of an oblong conical piece of dough, such as a pastry-cook generally rolls up in order to make a pye of. — Good God! cried my father, what havock and destruction must this make in the infinitely fine and tender texture of the cerebellum! — Or if there is such a juice as *Borri* pretends, — is it not enough to make the clearest liquid in the world both feculent and mothery?

Sterne adds a note correcting this: *Lithopaedus* alludes to a petrified child and has been mistaken for an author's name by a pardonable error, the word being so similar to the right name, *Trinecavellius*.

Shandy is reading about normal childbirth, Krug is not only a philosopher but a man. This fantastic relation with the obvious comes out also in Sterne's ubiquitous Latin and the invented Slavonic language which erupts all over Nabokov's text as a farcical acknowledgment of the need for verisimilitude, though it is also an indulgence of superior linguistic powers. In the same way both writers have the power to produce photographic realism to a point so far beyond the normal that it looks almost mad. In the dark Krug sees a lantern move "knightwise, to check him"; the rear lamps of bicycles are "anal rubies"; "Krug, a hunchback for the nonce, inserted his latchkey"; "at the dry-leaf touch of Gleeman's hand, the cat rose like boiling milk." And so forth.

Nabokov plays the devil with his narrative, just in the Sterne manner. Little notes are addressed to the author himself. "Describe the bedroom. . . . Last chance of describing the bedroom." The author intervenes out of pity: "it was then that I felt a pang of pity for Adam and slid towards him along an inclined beam of pale light—causing instantaneous madness." He introduces long digressions, including a long one on *Hamlet* which undoubtedly attempts to

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overgo the Scylla and Charybdis episode in *Ulysses*. "The real plot of the play," according to Professor Hamm, a scholar acceptable to the new régime, "will be readily grasped if the following is realised: the Ghost on the battlements of Elsinore is not the ghost of King Hamlet. It is that of Fortinbras the Elder." He has come to soften the morale of the Danes and prepare the way for the succession of Fortinbras the Younger. Krug listens to the argument, to "these intricate convolutions of sheer stupidity" which remind him of the new régime. Then he sketches the scenario (pre-Olivier) of a film on *Hamlet*: unweeded garden set, "Hamlet at Wittenberg, always late, missing G. Bruno's lectures," "lusty old King Hamlet smiting with a poleaxe the Polacks," "a liberal shepherd on marshy ground where *Orchis mascula* grows." Then the etymological game: Ophelia is quite possibly "an anagram of Alpheios, with the "S" lost in the damp grass—Alpheus the rivergod, who pursued a long-legged nymph until Artemis changed her into a stream (*cp.* Winnipeg Lake, ripple 585, Vico Press edition)." Finally there are translations of *Hamlet* into the newly-invented language. After all this two organ-grinders appear outside, and extraordinarily horrible police officers arrive to arrest Krug's friend.

The function of this digression is extremely complicated. It is a civilised way of not talking about Krug's wife, who has just died. It is a useless but agreeable exercise of intellect, and will contrast with the smooth bestiality of the police. It is funny. The translations are not just a wanton exhibition of glossolalia but another link with the main theme, just before the police arrive. Paduk, the dictator, has promoted the use of a writing-machine, a sort of typewriter which reproduces one's handwriting. Is the heartbreaking labour of translation, since it "presupposes a voluntary limitation of thought in submission to another man's genius" compensated by the pleasure it gives, or is it no more than "an exaggerated and spiritualised replica of Paduk's writing-machine?" Here is a theological issue of importance, the border territory between Krugs and Paduks. It is not settled; it is interrupted by the sinister duality of organ-grinders and the entry of the police.

There is wantonness here; there is wantonness also in the large-screen cardiograph in which medical minions study the action of Paduk's heart, in the parrot which carries police messages, in the conclusion of the novel where, with the bullets ripping into the mad Krug, the author switches off the story and turns his attention to the moths at his window. But it is easy to distinguish between this kind of wantonness and, say, Mr. Bratby's. Merely to write centrifugally, to torment the narrative line, to destroy the illusion by inconsistencies of presentation, all this is within the scope of any rudimentary, slightly sophisticated talent. It might be done by anyone who thinks, as many do, that the structure of a work of art is the business not of the artist but of the observer.

But this is not Nabokov's way. *Bend Sinister* is not finally wanton, any more than Sterne was. There is a pretty rigorous subordination of all these stunts and rhetorical exercises to the shape of the whole. Nabokov uses, and never abuses, familiar devices to establish "spatial" design—what Mr. Forster calls "rhythms." The "spatulate puddle" of the first paragraph is one such; Krug's wife taking off her jewels, the treacherous proverb of a trimming professor, are two more. And the tragic movement of the narrative seems hardly to be interrupted. The book opens with a self-consciously superb evocation of grief, a sort of virtuoso development of Rossetti's woodspurge; it goes on to the parable of Krug on the bridge, patient and humorous with the unreasonable peasant soldiers. Krug will not save his university nor himself, nor, in the end, his own son from the dictator because he will not see that stupidity and venality can become omnipotent; because he earned the right at school to sit on the head of Paduk, the Average

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Man. . . . Hurling himself on Paduk, he does not die only because the author intervenes—to tell us that Krug died well, and left his spatulate mark "in the intimate texture of space." He describes a moth outside his window: "a good night for mothing," he concludes. We are kept right out of Krug, right out of Nabokov. We are placed, at best, in respect of this author, where Krug places his bourgeois friend Maximov.

> When Krug mentioned once that the word "loyalty" phonetically and visually reminded him of a golden fork lying in the sun on a smooth spread of pale yellow silk, Maximov replied somewhat stiffly that to *him* loyalty was limited to its dictionary denotation. Commonsense with him was saved from smug vulgarity by a delicate emotional undercurrent, and the somewhat bare and birdless symmetry of his branching principles was ever so slightly disturbed by a moist wind blowing from regions which he naïvely thought did not exist.

We have to be as good as Maximov to be fit for Nabokov. We may not like this; but when reading *Bend Sinister* it is vital to remember that its author would label a book about the oppression of the human spirit by a stupid and brutal government "topical trash." It is a work of art or nothing.

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MR. BRATBY'S BOOK IS SHANDEAN in a dreary sense, a mess you are invited to condone for its "energy," and shape up in your own mind. It is curious that the announcement "I am enormously vital" can produce the same audience-reaction as vitality. In a period which venerates energy this means that to be high-handed and messy is a way to succeed. *Bend Sinister* has formidable energy; it gives an impression of stillness. *Breakdown*, on the other hand, is completely inert. There are volleys of authorial confidences, fanfares of bright intentions; but nothing falls or sounds in the right place. Matter in the wrong place is the old definition of dirt. The book is about an artist—a topic of wide appeal, if treated with sufficient vulgarity—and that, together with the fallacy about energy, may account for the fuss made of the book. The Sterne kind of novel is a tough proposition, for experts only.

Mr. Wilson's is a better book, and readable, but it is somewhat bogus in that it pretends to be thinking deeply without actually doing so, a trick that pleases at first because of its cheek, but palls in the end. There is as hot a story as any youth might dream up for himself; in a few days the hero, who has a pyromaniac in the room above, becomes intimate with a sadistic mass-murderer, bails out a nymphet-loving painter, and presides at the defloration of two virgins. He holds a great many seminal conversations, often with a respected but curiously uninspiring priest; he finds his admiration for Vaslav (Nijinsky) coming to a head in a visionary moment; washes himself a lot, listens to the same few bars of a Prokofiev symphony a few times, but falls asleep; and is always stumbling over paraffin tins. There is so much paraffin in the book that one felt uneasy about smoking. The point seems to be that when Sorme visits the mortuary he is not much impressed by the corpse of one of his friend's victims, but learns something from another victim, charred by paraffin from a stove which her husband threw at her. After this double-take *Augenblick* the superman goes home, arranges more sex, admires himself in the mirror, and prepares for life.

Mr. Wilson's painstaking book moves well under its burden of rubbish, but it cannot live with Nabokov's, or any genuinely finished book. What holds it together is an immature arrogance quite different from Nabokov's intellectual pride. There is a sort of music-hall imitation of thinking, curiously cheerful in the long run, very spry and publicity-conscious. Mr. Wilson might be called the Tommy Steele of lofty thinking. For those who like their geniuses to be nice and conversable he is a much better prospect than Nabokov.

Frank Kermode

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Trojan Horse, Chinese Dragon

EARLY in 1958 when the Poles wakened to the fact that Mao Tse-tung had fallen from the "side of the angels"—that he was no longer the "liberal" who had backed them against the Kremlin in 1956—a new bit of humour made the rounds in Warsaw: "Aren't we lucky to have such a large buffer state between China and us?"

The joke may be stale, but after five months in the Soviet Union, I found it sustained by more than Polish wit. Growing numbers of the younger Soviet intelligentsia recognise the uncomfortable truth. Theirs is the heartland of Communism, but of a Communism whose Eastern and Western faces look less alike each year. *Realpolitik* and official ideology dictate a strong alliance. Yet, I met people who applied "East" and "West" to their own bloc in much the same way we discuss the larger world struggle—to connote differing political and cultural attitudes. The "East"—*i.e.*, China—is causing the most anxiety. Soviet and Chinese moods seem to be running in opposite directions. The Russians crave nothing so much as peace and quiet, while the Chinese seem intent on upsetting the applecart of "peaceful coexistence." The Russians live better, relax more; the Chinese—poorer but more diligent—blaze with that revolutionary flame slowly being extinguished in the Soviet Union.

All that is irritating enough, but there is more. The Russians are intensely nationalistic. They easily imagine the potential challenge to their own "socialist leadership" posed by the awakened Asian colossus. Nagging fears came out in many small ways; for instance, the half-serious joke about how disobedient children and lazy students are now admonished: "If you do not do your work, 600 million Chinese will!"

THIS ANXIETY IS HAVING extraordinary repercussions in Soviet attitudes towards the "socialist West"—*i.e.*, Eastern Europe. It is contributing, I think, to a wholesale reappraisal of the satellites. The change is subtle, psychological, but quite real. It is profoundly affecting Soviet social development, for the more antagonism the Russians feel towards the Chinese, the more they strive to emphasise the genuine community of interest with "their" Europe.

The new feeling of equality is more cultural than political. Soviet Communists are still the acknowledged tutors; satellite Communist parties—the willing pupils. But Soviet industrialised society is in search of refinement, the manners and sophistication to go with improved living standards. Educated Russians, the heirs of that society, are turning to the traditional cultures of Eastern Europe for some of the clues, and the Khrushchev policy has paved the way. In Stalin's time Eastern Europe was simply an appendage of the Soviet Empire. The Russian might as well look into a cracked looking-glass; he saw nothing but an ugly distorted image of himself and his surroundings. That has changed. Out of necessity as much as calculation, Mr. Khrushchev has transformed empire into Communist Commonwealth.

That means Communists still rule each country according to Soviet orthodoxy. It excludes both democracy and an independent foreign policy. But each Party leadership can apply the common principles in its own way. Moscow no longer dictates uniform internal policies. Gomulka's flexible dictatorship in Poland coexists with Ulbricht's rigid Stalinism in East Germany. Eastern Europe has once more taken on that national and cultural variety Stalin's monolith sought to destroy.

THE change has created a new situation. Here are respectable members of the "socialist camp," yet many of their ways remain strangely Western. Their intelligentsia has used the post-Stalin "thaw" to resurrect common cultural ties with Western Europe where possible. The Russians never had these ties. They are the pupils in this realm, and they are discovering that these Eastern European allies are "safe" channels for importing suspect Western ideas and habits into the Soviet Union.

One small example—a Hungarian fashion-show I saw in Moscow. Fashion-shows are no novelty now that the Soviet woman is encouraged to forget the shock-worker past for her feminine future. But I wanted to see how much of the particular style of Budapest would reach the Muscovites, and I was not disappointed. Elegant models moved professionally along a centre ramp. The kleig lights above highlighted the latest fashions, reversible raincoats, short hooped skirts, stiletto high-heeled shoes, all absolutely unobtainable in Moscow. They stepped to the jazz rhythms of a Hungarian five-piece band which occasionally (but only occasionally) slowed to the pace of some melody like *"Blue Moon."* Women in the audience—many of them with the Soviet "fuzz" permanent and standard print dress—busily took notes or photographed the models.

The great surprise came during intermission. Part of the audience went out to buy pattern books left over from the French fashion-show several months before. They missed the best part of the show. A real crooner, complete with dinner-jacket and shining satin lapels, strolled on to the stage from the wings, and he and the band proceeded to a "musical interlude" unheard of in Moscow. Vigorous piano, drums, and saxophone took up the *"ABC Boogey"* and *"Volare,"* the young songster cavorted around the microphone, first bending his knees to sensual depth, then reeling backwards and forwards, frenzied arms outstretched, while young Russians in the crowded galleries "beat out" the rhythm in rapt attention. Here was Elvis Presley without guitar, the incarnation of that "rock-'n'-roller" known in the Soviet Union only through hearsay, adverse propaganda, or Eastern European

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picture magazines. Encore followed encore followed hammering applause and muted whistles, until the more matronly ladies began filtering back into the hall, the lights dimmed, and the second part of the fashion-show began.

The contrast between this exhibition and the overpowering puritanism of Soviet society came home several days later on the most fashionable beach in Moscow. I followed a group of young adults into a kind of natural trench formed by a grass mound near the back fence. An eighteen- or nineteen-year-old accordion-player led the group. Within minutes he began on *"Rock around the Clock."* Two bare-footed girls in attractively brief bikinis chose partners who threw them over their shoulders and through their legs to the music. But this primitive "rock-'n'-roll" did not last long. A local militiaman was on the track. He walked over from the beach, stopped the music, and led the young accordion-player back to the water. To be sure, no one was arrested, and the young people covertly jeered at this white-jacketed scion of authority, but no one contradicted his command.

"We must still do such dancing in private," one of the boys confided.

POLAND and Czechoslovakia seem to have the greatest influence in this new cultural penetration. The Poles are the most provocative, the most *avant garde*, the most openly Western. They are also the least reliable.

"The Poles love us so much they would love to hug us to death," was the suspicion of a typical Soviet intellectual.

The Poles seem determined to shock the Russians out of their old conventions. One evening in one of the best Leningrad restaurants a party of merry Polish tourists—as fashionably dressed as the Americans and British in the room—danced the most outrageous "jive" and other variations to whatever tune the perspiring orchestra played. Later I watched one of them handle a crowd of Russians who still form every evening outside the Intourist hotels to quiz foreigners and inspect their automobiles.

The Pole spoke fluent Russian, and was far from reticent. The youthful intensity of his speech dominated his audience. Listen to some of their questions and his answers.

"Can the Poles travel freely?" *Answer:* "We can travel anywhere we like, providing we have foreign currency or an invitation."

(Incredulously) "You mean you get passports easily?" *Answer:* "Yes, the government has to give them now." (Not quite true, but almost.)

"Can you listen to foreign broadcasts?" (This was before the jamming of *Voice of America* and *BBC* ceased in the Soviet Union.) *Answer:* "Of course. Why not? If we do not like a programme, we can always turn it off."

"We think Poland is only an outpost of the United States." (A voice from the rear). *Answer* (with great indignation): "That is not so. We take what we like from you and the Americans. The rest we leave alone."

And so it went on for over an hour. Afterwards I had a private word with him. "Did you see the way their eyes bulged when I told them what we can do in Poland," he exploded in disgust. "They just do not know anything. We have just come from Yalta. The music stops there at 11.30. All the restaurants close. What a way to run a resort!"

AN OUTSIDER BEGINS to distinguish "U" and "non-U" among his acquaintances by their attitude towards Polish art and magazines. Both are plainly controversial. A Polish art exhibit in Moscow was viciously attacked in the official press (the official line), while students and "sophisticates" privately defended its abstractionism and other modern tendencies. The official Polish magazine, *Poland*, is full of "formalist" drawings and traces of a political humour unknown in the Soviet Union.

"We appreciated the jokes far more in 1955 and 1956," said an obviously "U" girl university student, as we strolled along the promenade at Sochi, the crowded summer resort on the Caucasus shore of the Black Sea. "They are not so good now," she continued, ". . . but good enough!"

Last summer the Poles tactfully refrained from showing their best film, *Ashes and Diamonds*, at the International Film Festival in Moscow. The Soviet delegation was not so tactful about discussing it. The story of post-war civil conflict was too pessimistic, they said; the film technique—not "socialist realism." "Socialist realism" has more than one definition, the Poles hit back, and implied *they* had left the platitudes behind long ago. The argument ended there. But it came into proper perspective when I discovered that Chinese students were attacking recent Soviet films for their "decadence"!

THE impact of Czechoslovakia is less spectacular than Poland, but perhaps more important. Czechoslovakia is the only reliable ally, the quietly efficient ally, the one ally—in fact, the only country—industrially developed *before* the Communists took power. The Russians respect them. These "Germans of the Slavs" have just the right mixture of technical talent, material well-being, and political respectability to appeal to the Soviet *nouveau riche*. They have *both* Industrialisation and Culture.

"People from Czechoslovakia are amazed when they discover how we live," offered a young Soviet dissident who long ago ceased to "keep up the side" to Westerners. "Even the most dedicated Czechs," he explained, "say there would be ten Hungaries here if they had to live the way we do."

I knew what he meant. Several weeks before, in Sochi, I had met a Czech librarian, Maria, a day-tourist off one of those huge steamers cruising from one Black Sea resort to another with loads of Eastern European tourists. She said it is almost impossible to get a passport for Western travel, so Czechs content themselves with holidays along the Bulgarian and Soviet rivieras. We sat on the palatial verandah of the sea-station restaurant. When art historians start cataloguing perfect examples of Stalinist architecture, they must surely choose this building. It is pure wedding-cake in stone—a long tapering tower rises from a squat rectangular base suffused in ochre rococo. A splashing fountain is

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the hub of the restaurant dance-floor; it keeps circling waltzers on bearing, and effectively separates over-sized orchestra from dining patrons. After forty-five minutes of fruitless attempts to attract a waitress, attempts beginning with polite requests and ending in an altercation with the *maître d'hôtel* (whose pleadings moved the recalcitrant waitress as little as mine), Maria and I began to commiserate with one another. Russians who were busy stuffing themselves around us saw nothing exceptional in our plight, if they even noticed it.

"We all know the Russians live worse than we," Maria began, "but you have to see it to believe it. Such service would never be tolerated in a Czech restaurant. And look at their table manners! Why, they eat like . . . well, like pigs!"

We worked off our frustration in that vein for a while, and then began to survey the whole Soviet scene more dispassionately.

"The Russians have more money now, but they do not know how to use it properly," Maria diagnosed. "But they are learning. I was surprised to see good material, even artificial cloth, and some of the women even dress with style.

"You know . . . ," she reflected still more deeply, "we admire the Russians for their ability to industrialise out of nothing. They have created their industrial civilisation, now they must build the culture to go with it."

Indeed, Czechoslovakia has a definite rôle in this "civilising mission." Take the glass and crystal exhibition they ran last summer and autumn in the Manezhd, the beautiful Tsarist stables next to the Moscow Kremlin. It was a model of its kind: the right combination of education and entertainment for the exhibition-hungry Russians. Multi-coloured bubbles flashed through lighted glass tubes to demonstrate complicated chemical processes; heavy cut-crystal vases sat next to more modern table glass. No Muscovite could miss the contrast with the deadly dull display of heavy Soviet glass on Gorky Street.

The Czech restaurant upstairs had an even greater impact, and it became the rage of the capital. Modern décor, efficient waiters in clean white jackets, silent trolleys full of choice *hors-d'œvres*, delicious Pilsner beer and Czech cognac served in fragile glass, formally-attired *maîtres d'hôtel* tirelessly supervising good service and promptly producing requested bills, and queues which really moved; these "luxuries" turned eating into a delightful pastime no Soviet restaurant creates. Here was Western-style "gracious living" hitherto unknown in Moscow.

THESE EASTERN EUROPEAN IMPORTS may seem paltry compared to the obvious political stagnation of the whole Communist orbit. They certainly are not the dramatic stuff of front-page headlines. On the other hand, these imports strike at the heart of that society which has bred the stagnation. They affect the habits and thought of everyday life. When those habits and thought change, political habits and thought must eventually follow suit. At least, that is the hope.

The Soviet Communists well realise the danger. A press campaign against the "trojan horse of peaceful coexistence" is in full swing, that is, against "bourgeois values" which weaken pure Communist resolve now that Cold War barriers against the West are coming down. But that "trojan horse" is creeping into the Soviet Union through their own Eastern European front yard. It is tolerated by some, embraced by others, because few Russians are certain any longer where the Chinese dragon in the back yard is heading.

George Sherman

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LETTERS

Durrell, Corke, and the Critics

SINCE I was the only critic to be exempted from Mr. Hilary Corke's strictures last month may I be allowed to express my distaste for the tone of his article? I do so because this particular trick of the trade has begun to be practised far too often.

Mr. Corke believes that Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* is an important book—and so do I. Others of our heterogeneous fraternity disagree with us; and I would be happy to take up an argument with them in your pages or anywhere else. But what none of us has the least right to do is to break ranks, jump on top of a dung hill and cock a snook at the rest as if he were a creature of a different and superior race. By using, to describe his colleagues, the comic-insulting term "Criticus," Mr. Corke implies that he is not a critic like the rest of us, but some sort of Moses who has received the Tablets of the Law from the top of his private midden. I will say nothing about Mr. Corke's cheap gibes against critics who have travelled less widely than he has. It is the general assumption of *knowing* the truth about the Durrell books which is intolerable. He doesn't know the truth about them because it is not knowable in these terms.

The best that any of us can do is to make our judgments with care, express them forcibly, and attempt to reinforce them in depth. We can do this by saying, in as much detail as our space allows us, what we mean when we say that a given book is good or bad. I believe myself that books *are* good or bad: I am not a subjectivist. But I also believe that no critic—not even the most heavily encumbered with a critical apparatus—can either know or, still less prove, that his own judgment of a book is the right one. Mr. Corke and I believe one thing about Durrell; many of our colleagues believe the opposite. A fruitful argument between us would lead to a continuous clarification of each position; but arrogant abuse simply makes a critical ass of the abuser.

I write with strong feelings on this subject because I recently protested in print against a similar article which Mr. Donald Hall wrote about Pound's *Cantos*. I threw down a gage to him in the form of four specific questions; but he didn't pick it up. He kept mum. Recently, too, in still another periodical, I appeared among the goats when two young men delivered a similar attack on the critics for their failure to recognise that Mr. Golding's latest novel is a masterpiece. Get back into the ranks, for that is where we all belong!

This does *not* mean that I think everybody's judgment is of equal value. Nor does it mean that we should be over-modest about our own judgments. "You are wrong about Durrell, and I will tell you why," is one attitude. "You are all beneath my contempt since I alone know the truth" is quite a different one. What I *do* mean is that there is no *prima facie* case, in the eyes of God, a Martian, or a non-critic, for assuming that any one of us is right and the others wrong. If such a judgment should be vindicated later on it will not be by the methods which Mr. Corke has chosen.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

Lindsey, Ipswich

Priestley in Australia

IN A recent paragraph about the Melbourne Peace Congress, ENCOUNTER committed itself to a strange distortion of the truth. The paragraph says: "Recently at a Peace Congress in Melbourne Mr. J B. Priestley (thinking of Tibor Déry) argued vainly for a resolution claiming 'freedom for every true artist to express and communicate his vision of life and its delights and complexities. . . .' Abram Tertz, we think, would have appreciated the irony that he found himself in a minority of one."

Mr. Priestley was not in a minority of one for the simple reason that he was not there at all, and did not argue, vainly or otherwise, for this resolution. It was moved by Vincent Buckley but defeated by such lovers of freedom as the Communist writer Frank Hardy and his followers. The best that Mr. Priestley did was to dissociate himself a few days later from the rejection of the resolution.

But despite his silly conduct in Australia Mr. Priestley seems to be giving himself a good Press in England, and in a recent article in the *New Statesman* he described as McCarthyite those Australian intellectuals who took peace and freedom seriously enough to warn him that the Melbourne Peace Congress was Communist-dominated. The point seems to be that Mr. Priestley knew it was, but did not care, because although he would not be seen dead in a Communist front in England that sort of thing is good enough for Australia. Early last month the editor of the Sydney *Observer* was provoked by Mr. Priestley's article to write to the *New Statesman* making this point. The letter also said: "Australians are beginning to fear that the last traces of English colonialist prejudices are now found to be in London radicals. . . ."

H. R. KRYGIER

Sydney

MR. KRYGIER is justified in his correction. My wife and I were guests of the Congress and not delegates to it, therefore we took no part in its official proceedings. We did, however, associate ourselves publicly with the protesting minority in the Writers' Section.

But his last paragraph is as inaccurate as it is ill-natured. I don't think I can fairly be accused of "silly conduct in Australia" where I fulfilled, to most people's satisfaction, an exceptionally heavy programme of public meetings, radio and TV, interviews, travel. One article, which is all I have written about my Australian visit, hardly justifies the statement that "Mr. Priestley seems to be giving himself a good Press in England," although any

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man, after an encounter with the Sydney Press, might be excused for trying. Nor did I say in that article what he accuses me of saying: he should read it again. The only "intellectuals" who warned me that the Congress was "Communist-dominated" were certain members of the Melbourne University Faculty, who did not write to me until I arrived for the opening of the Congress, and who said they were taking part in it themselves. There was nothing in the original invitation and literature of the Congress to suggest it was "Communist-dominated," and during the months that elapsed before our arrival in Melbourne none of the people who thought like Mr. Krygier got into touch with me. I admit that if they had have done, I would have ignored their warnings. And for this reason. The Congress offered me an opportunity to talk about nuclear disarmament, along the lines of our Campaign. And I can assure Mr. Krygier that if the Campaign did not exist here, and if the only chance I had of discussing the subject publicly came from a similar Congress in London, then I would accept the invitation of any such Congress. The idea that I behaved as I did because of some mysterious "English colonialist prejudice" is idiotic. This "colonialism" exists only in the minds of Mr. Krygier and his friends. And I hereby announce that I do not propose to reply to any more of these ridiculous charges, even if somebody in Sydney discovers that I spent some of my time there eating human flesh. Australia—big, generous, friendly herself—must cope herself with these sour types.

J. B. Priestley

London

The Two Cultures and Education

Isn't the split between the two cultures fundamentally between two methods of approach? "Science" for most people to-day implies the physicochemical analytic approach, which is essentially mechanistic, designed to find out how things work, here and now, with a view to their technological control. It can, of course, be applied to human problems, including problems of human physiology and health, but there too inevitably issues in some kind of technology. "Mind" is an inconvenient phenomenon which can't be fitted into its categories; and so "science" refuses to consider mind scientifically, either arrogantly dismissing it as an epiphenomenon, a mere by-product of material mechanisms, or irrationally proclaiming it and its products, such as values or works of art, as something outside the province of science.

Per contra, Snow's traditional or literary culture is rooted in mind and its products, and starts from the fact of values—intellectual, æsthetic, and ethical. Sometimes, with equal arrogance, it claims that its values are absolute or irreducible and in any case outside the reach of the materialistic hands of science; or it merely resists scientific advance by claiming empirical validity for its traditional values, including their unscientific aspects.

The gap between "the two cultures" can be diminished in various ways. On the scientific side, biology can be raised from its present status as poor relative of physics and chemistry or hired servant of medical and agricultural technology, to a position of importance and trust. After all, biology links man with the rest of life, and mind with matter.

For another thing, science can pay more attention to its own history. This will give scientists a proper combination of humility and pride, and will help them and others to understand better the laboriousness of the scientific process, its numerous mistakes, and yet its unique effectiveness in extracting knowledge from ignorance and truth from error.

On the literary-traditionalist side also, history can be more adequately stressed—history of values, of science and learning, of arts and religions, of social institutions—showing how all are interrelated; above all, how "science" is only a part of the general search for knowledge and understanding, and how the state of knowledge influences everything else, including values and beliefs.

Meanwhile, various remedies are being suggested and sometimes tried: more courses in general science for non-scientists, bigger doses of literature and art and philosophy for scientists, more history of science for everybody. . . . But all these are at best only bridges between the parts of a fragmented system: they do not give it true wholeness or unity.

Some general view of human destiny is surely the indispensable educational basis for an unfragmented culture. Yet this task is now largely relegated to the sidelines, often under the head of religious teaching. It could, however, become the unifying core for our educational theory and practice, because at last the increase of our knowledge is providing such a view, both comprehensive and relevant to the present state of the world.

The unifying concept is evolution. The entire universe, we now realise, is one single process of evolution; and man is the agent for its future course on earth. The earth shows three phases of evolution—inorganic, biological, and human (or, as we are beginning to call it, psychosocial), each emerging from its predecessor.

Geology and the other earth-sciences show how the earth's make-up arose; how its physical features and its open and hidden resources were all produced by natural agencies. Biology shows us life as a simple branching flow of self-reproducing matter. During its evolution, natural selection produced immense variety, a succession of new dominant types, and the emergence of mind. Ecology demonstrates the relations of animals and plants with each other and with their lifeless environment. Physiology explains how organisms work and utilise the raw materials of their existence, genetics how they reproduce and vary; ethology shows us the springs and workings of behaviour.

And then the human phase. The new vision shows us to ourselves in our correct place and perspective. We are composed of the same matter as the rest of the universe, operated by the same energy. Like other organisms, we are self-reproducing patterns of metabolism, depending on the same apparatus of enzymes and genes as they. We share emotions and drives and memory with higher animals.

But we are animals with a difference, a unique

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kind of organism with new capacities—of reason, creative imagination, conceptual thought, and communication by speech-symbols. And these have given man a second method of evolution, by means of the cumulative transmission of relevant experience, and have made him the latest dominant type on earth. No other type of animal can possibly make any major evolutionary advance so long as man is there; man is to-day responsible for the whole future of evolution on this planet.

Meanwhile, the knowledge-explosion of the last hundred years has revolutionised our ideas about history. Human history now includes pre-history, and is seen as an extension of biological evolution; it is the brief and tentative beginning of the psychosocial phase of evolution, with millions of years before it. We can detect certain major trends in the process, certain key factors in its operations. It, too, tends to produce higher organisation of ideas and social institutions and machines, not of bodily structure and mechanism. It tends towards convergence instead of divergence, towards the production of a single inter-thinking group instead of a multiplicity of separate inter-breeding groups or species. It tends persistently towards increased and improved knowledge, and its better utilisation both for improved practical control and for improved values and beliefs for human guidance.

Fulfilment is the key-word. Richer fulfilment for more human beings as the comprehensive aim towards which humanity is being directed, both in the long evolutionary future and in the brief lives of individuals. As this is grasped, the Welfare State will surely give place to the Fulfilment Society. It should not be beyond the wit of educational man to devise a system bringing out the key ideas of this new unitary vision.

Let me give a few examples. First and foremost is man's relation with nature, leading on to the idea of conservation. How to bring this out, especially for town children, will be a major task of education.

Equally important is the idea of scientific method, illustrated by the increase of man's understanding about natural phenomena, including biological phenomena such as reproduction, metabolism, behaviour, heredity, ecological balance, development, and evolution. A historical approach is here clearly indicated, to bring out the self-correcting nature of scientific method, leading to an overall increase of established knowledge; the importance of new concepts in producing a better organisation of factual knowledge; and the exciting prospect of the huge areas still awaiting proper scientific exploration.

Here the educationist has a formidable task—how to introduce broad general ideas without vagueness, how to pay adequate attention to national history and achievement without sacrificing the world view of history and of the general development of science, religion, and art. One useful approach is to think in terms of the history of ideas, and point out how ideas become embodied in institutions and translated into activities.

The arts are in some ways the most difficult subject for the educationist to-day. The modern hard-headed world of economics and technology regards them as a luxury, a frill, or mere escapism, and the ingrained puritanism of Anglo-Saxondom and orthodox Communism suspects them as frivolous or even demoralising. The proper approach, I take it, is the operative or functional one. What do the arts *do* for us? What functions can they perform in the life of society and the lives of individuals? With this, the problem is clarified. Art finds a place in history: the teaching of history can be illuminated by art, and conversely the evolution of art can be related to historical fact. With the aid of modern techniques of reproduction, boys and girls can become acquainted with works of art, including contemporary art, and begin to understand that their appreciation requires interest and mental discipline, not merely passive reception.

In this field, "projects" are well known to be of value—the actual *doing* of art, expressing your ideas or feeling in paint or clay (or for that matter, in music or drama). This is not likely to yield great works of art, any more than school science projects are likely to yield important discoveries; but both bring home the value of creative activity to the doer as well as to the receiver.

Indeed, all project methods are an attempt to emphasise the importance of *doing* and *being* in education, as well as that of *knowing*. Thus, education should be two-sided. This eliciting of personal possibilities, aimed at fuller exercise and enjoyment of inherent capacities, is one side; the acquisition of useful knowledge and skills and social techniques is the other.

The educationist should focus on the unrealised possibilities of development. To start with, there is the fact that in most human beings perception itself is inadequate and slovenly, and so is posture: we are making very poor use of the basic possibilities of our being. To tackle this problem, we must begin by consigning to the historical dustheap the outdated idea of the dualism of soul and body, mind and brain. We are, as H. G. Wells used to emphasise, unitary mind-bodies, whose mental-spiritual and material-physiological properties are inextricably interlocked. Physical jerks and school games are not adequate for the proper training of the body. And we do virtually nothing to promote the acquisition of inner mental skills like concentrated insight or directed meditation.

New vistas have been opened for education by the important discovery made during the present century that there is, in almost everyone, the capacity to profit from practising some creative art (and in many, some degree of real talent). We are being driven to construct a new image of man: and education must re-design itself to fit this new image.

At the moment, as Sir Charles Snow stresses, Britain must produce more scientists and technologists. We need a committee of the most representative nature to see how this could be done without still further aggravating the split in our culture. Such a body should not merely consider what minor adjustments should be made in the existing educational system, with its muddled thinking, its confusion of special cadres and élite, its compartmentalised universities, competitive scholarships, mass examinations, and precocious specialisation. It

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should consider its particular task in a general light —in terms of education as a major organ of psychosocial evolution, with the reduction of waste and frustration and the promotion of achievement and fulfilment as its essential aim, and the eliciting of capacities and the realisation of possibilities as its essential method.

JULIAN HUXLEY

London

The T.L.S. Instructs . . .

DR. FIEDLER does not sound at all well. I have been reading his article on "The *T.L.S.* Instructs the Elite" in your March number, and I do not know how to answer it without bringing on another bout of fever. For it is an imprecise article, and therefore it cannot easily be countered except on its own terms: by lobbing one unsupported opinion against another.

What seems to have upset Dr. Fiedler is this. As a member of what he calls "mythically, the last remnants of Bloomsbury," I have apparently collected some ill-disposed sophomores from the Ivy League Graduate Schools and the Indiana School of Letters and organised, in a special number of *The Times Literary Supplement*, an estimate of the American Imagination so wide of the mark that it does not accord in every particular with Dr. Fiedler's personal views.

This shall not recur, I promise. Next time, Dr. Fiedler shall write it all himself—so far he only claims to be the source of a single piece "perpetrated without even a nod in my direction and with little ingenuity or incisiveness." He shall write on all the subjects which strike him as lying at the core of the American Imagination: on the subliterate American public, on Charles Van Doren, on the incompetence of Salinger and the shamelessness of Clifton Fadiman, on *Time* and *Life* and the Quiz and Leopold and Loeb, and the utter beastliness of middle-aged Britishers who once were asked to dine with Lytton Strachey.

But we are not at next time yet; and I confess myself at present unable to see just why Dr. Fiedler is so queasy, unless it is that the writers in the *T.L.S.* actually *liked* a good many aspects of the American Imagination, and when they did not like others gave reasons for their reaction. It is not easy to pin Dr. Fiedler down about this, since at one moment he shuts me up in what he calls a "highbrow ghetto" and at the next he accuses me and all my works of going beyond the bounds of the upper-philistine at one end of the scale and—in the same paragraph—of the lower-philistine at the other. Are we, then, so terribly, terribly clever and smug that we consistently look upon arts in America through the wrong end of a telescope, or so terribly, terribly bird-brained that we cannot even discern what we are looking at? Since most of Dr. Fiedler's evidence is of the breathless kind which either avoids facts or gets them wrong, I cannot even answer my own question. To give only two examples of his method: he is roughly a third out in his basic statement about the *T.L.S.* "I do not know [he writes] how many Americans are aware that the circulation of the *T.L.S.* is somewhere round about 33,000: I rather fancy some imaginations do better." A letter to our management would have done better than any imagination; it would have provided Dr. Fiedler with an accurate fact. Then, he goes on a few paragraphs later, to show that he cannot discriminate between the editorial part of a paper and the advertising matter provided by a professional copy-writer.

None of this would have stung me to reply, however, had not Dr. Fiedler attempted to maintain a position so absurd that I cannot let it go by in silence. His contention is that "hostility to the art of America is no longer chic," and that for this reason I and my hired incompetents have tried to climb on a freshly-painted bandwagon, so as to assert an imaginary position as moral tutor of the arts in the United States. Let Dr. Fiedler only plough through our pages once again, and he will find no evidence whatever of anything so silly. On one page, it is true, we quote a passage from *The Education of Henry Adams* to the effect that "all through life, one had seen the American on his literary knees to the European; and all through many lives back for some two centuries, one had seen the European snub or patronise the American; not always intentionally, but effectively." But that describes a world which ended before either Dr. Fiedler or I was born; and I cannot see what is offensive about giving due recognition to the ever-growing part played in the world of the imagination by American talents during the last fifty years.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

London

IT IS not my fault that Leslie Fiedler didn't know that the writer of the article on television in the *Times Literary Supplement* is an American. I asked the editor to indicate this, and it could have been done without violating the *T.L.S.*'s rule of anonymity (which doesn't apply to poets or painters) but it was not done.

On the other side, I am not to blame for the strike in the printing trades which delayed publication of the special Supplement. My piece was written before the quiz scandals became public.

Even if it were written to-day I could not, within the terms of my agreement with the *T.L.S.*, have done much more than mention the quiz shows and their scandals. I was asked to write on TV and the American imagination with a clear understanding that I would deal with the opportunities offered to the creative artist by television and the effect of television on the imagination of its public. I did discuss the limited spur to the imagination brought by reports and interpretation of public affairs and the failure of producers to satisfy more than a fraction of the interests and curiosities of their own audiences, not to mention those of the "major minorities" as Charles Siepmann has called them. Mr. Fiedler wanted me to do something neither I nor the editor wanted done.

The significance of his attack lies in his compounding the "egghead fallacy," in demonstrating why the genuine intellectual is doomed to be ineffective in dealing with such a phenomenon as popular television.

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After noting that the American people "glued to their television sets" might be at a disadvantage in dealing with the more severely-trained peoples behind the Iron Curtain, Adlai Stevenson said, "they aren't even having a good time." I called this "the egghead fallacy" and Mr. Fiedler says he finds it easier to believe Mr. Stevenson than to believe (what I said) that television provides entertainment "of relative goodness and vast copiousness; it is better entertainment than most people could get elsewhere." Since he cannot doubt the copiousness of television in America, he must doubt its relative goodness. In the context of my article the comparison was with other popular entertainments—those available throughout the country, not only in a few big cities. No observer of what really goes on in the scattered theatres and concert halls and (five days out of seven) in the movie houses differs from me in this estimate.

It can be said that the American people ought not to take pleasure in what television offers, that what most of the people see most of the time is degrading, that it isn't good for people to have a good time in such a way; the one thing that cannot be said is that they aren't having a good time. Anyone who has overheard conversations on suburban trains or in supermarkets or in country post-offices will testify to the absorption in and satisfaction with the great bulk of television fare.

And anyone who has observed America closely will say that this vast satisfaction given by trivial and tawdry things is precisely what the intellectual needs to be concerned with. It is his function to discover the nature of this satisfaction and to discover also whether the public wants are really satisfied and how to bring forward other latent wants. He can work on improving standards of programmes and can work on raising the levels of public demand. But he cannot work at all if he refuses to acknowledge the grim fact that satisfaction with the present offerings does exist.

Mr. Fiedler rules himself out of court when he says that "TV without quizzes is . . . Hamlet without the Prince." TV existed before the quizzes and exists now that the quizzes have virtually ceased to exist.

He rules himself out of another court—the court of his professional peers. Deliberately refusing to see what actually occurs in popular television, he cannot believe that anyone can be trying to improve it without somehow selling out.

In a single sly paragraph he manages to associate the bribed and perjured quiz stars with the M.C. of the morally innocuous *Information Please*, with professors who make Shakespeare "palatable," and asks what is "the real difference" between these "accommodations" which "pandered to . . . public confusion," these "examples of analagous deceit and moral trifling" and *Invitation to Learning*.

This programme was created by Lyman Bryson, a professor at Columbia University and a member of the staff of the Columbia Broadcasting System, who devoted the latter part of his life to discovering how the mass media might be put to the use of learning, how their dangerous anti-cultural powers might be curbed. His programme, according to Mr. Fiedler, was a series of "eminently respectable (sometimes insufferably boring) conversations about Great Literature. . . ." Mr. Fiedler would be the first to condemn it if it had tried to be always bright and merry about Plato and John Locke. He manages somehow to suggest that there was something ignoble and dishonest about "the whole academic community" which collaborated with Lyman Bryson.

I must assume that he wrote what he did before Lyman Bryson died. For his imputation alone, for the underhanded and slick suggestion he has put over, he is self-condemned, he has committed intellectual dishonesty. I should think his friends would find it as hard to forgive as I do who am, for this, forever his enemy.

THE WRITER OF THE *T.L.S.* ARTICLE *U.S.A.*

Auschwitz

IN his article "Auschwitz and the Camp Commandant" [ENCOUNTER, April], Mr. Constantine FitzGibbon does not mention—but perhaps he can explain?—the extraordinary resemblance between Rudolf Hoess's autobiography and Robert Merle's novel, *La Mort est mon métier*, published by Gallimard in 1953. The protagonist of Merle's novel also had "an excessively strict father": he also, if memory serves, was a member of something like the *Freikorps* and something like the "Atamanen": he also was a protégé of Himmler, and the commander of a Nazi death-camp. More remarkable still, he also went about his appalling business with the worried conscientiousness of a bureaucratic zombie, apparently impervious to shame or horror. A Franco-American critic (Henri Peyre: *The Contemporary French Novel*, Oxford University Press, p. 324), writing in 1955—before the publication of Hoess's autobiography—declared (ironically enough) that *La Mort est mon métier* "sounds false from beginning to end and would be better forgotten." It would be interesting to know whether it was written with knowledge of Hoess's papers or of his history, and if not by what means Merle divined the repulsive psychology of his original.

RICHARD MAYNE

Brussels

[*We would imagine that M. Merle was familiar with some of the documents in the forty-two volumes of Nuremberg trial testimony. There were also several early accounts of Hoess and his career, and a special study written by the prison psychologist of the Nazi war criminals* (*cf. G. M. Gilbert*, The Psychology of Dictatorship, *1950*).—ED. NOTE.]

Nigel Dennis

MAY I be allowed to congratulate you on acquiring Nigel Dennis to write about theatre? For us in the theatre, especially for the young writers, to have informed and mature consideration of our work will be remarkable; not since Desmond McCarthy has this privilege been granted to us.

GEORGE DEVINE

Royal Court Theatre,
London

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Brecht Again: A Soviet Reply

THE *May issue of "Inostrannaya Literatura" ("Foreign Literature") published a Note on Berthold Brecht which occupied only two-and-a-half pages. Its purpose was to acquaint the Soviet reader with the anti-Brecht campaign which is at present waged by many bourgeois literary experts. The Note re-told, in particular, the gist of two articles—one published in the English journal* ENCOUNTER, *and signed by the critic Esslin; the second, published in the French journal "Preuves," signed "F.B."*

We repeat: the Note on Brecht pursued only the most modest of objectives. It contained no sensational disclosures, divulged no fresh facts. It discovered no "Americas." Yet it aroused a storm of indignant protests. Thus, ENCOUNTER *answered it twice—in an editorial, under the section "From the Other Shore," and in an article entitled "Brecht and Moscow." The West German journal "Der Monat," the French weekly "Arts," and the Spanish paper "Estafeta literaria" also joined in these polemics. Both* ENCOUNTER *and "Der Monat" heavily attacked our Note. The critic Esslin did not lag far behind them in* ENCOUNTER, *accusing the author of the Note of all the sins under the sun. However, may Mr. Esslin's heated and irascible tones rest on his own conscience. Let us try, instead, to make head or tail of the arguments put forward by* ENCOUNTER. *But first we will make one small reservation. In principle we are not at all averse to a discussion of the works of Brecht. Why shouldn't we argue about Brecht's artistry, his theory of the "epic theatre," his images and his style? Such arguments are perfectly legitimate. After all, Brecht was a complex and contradictory artist, and his works have always aroused heated disputes and passionate debates.*

Is it, perhaps, that ENCOUNTER and Esslin have *started this sort of discussion? Alas, no! . . .*

The well-known Swiss playwright, Duerrenmatt, said recently that "Brecht's Communism must be taken seriously," that Brecht was a "revolutionary" and "our judge." What a pity that Mr. Esslin and many of his colleagues lack the courage to take Brecht's Communism seriously. And precisely for that reason they invent—to put it mildly—the strange thesis that Brecht's ideology was half "ambiguous" and half "anti-Soviet."

Let us say frankly that while indulging in polemics with us, neither Mr. Esslin nor the journal ENCOUNTER *nor the journal "Der Monat" bother much about finding proper arguments. They call for proof, but themselves indulge in hints, gossip, exclamation marks, and obscure ideas. Nevertheless, don't complain, dear reader: we shall have to quote absolutely all the arguments given by* ENCOUNTER *and the critic Esslin (a task made easier by the fact that* ENCOUNTER *has already numbered them and put them in the right order). And this is the reason: those who criticise us maintain that this journal would never dare to make known their arguments to the Soviet reader. So awe-inspiring are they, so convincing! Let us examine these arguments:*

ARGUMENT ONE: *Brecht did not live in the Soviet Union during his years in emigration. So what? The present chairman of the East German Writers' Union, Anna Seghers, also spent those years not in Moscow but in Mexico. Does* ENCOUNTER *really think that all Communists who fled from Nazi Germany were obliged to go and live in the U.S.S.R.?*

ARGUMENT TWO: *Brecht had his money in a Swiss Bank. We do confess, we don't know where Brecht kept his money. What is more, we don't care. Had he been a banker or big industrialist, it might have been interesting to establish where he banked and what shares he bought. But when one speaks of an artist, what matters is not where he kept his fees but for what cause he wrote his books.*

ARGUMENT THREE: *Brecht had trouble with the "Communist censorship of Eastern Germany." Perhaps* ENCOUNTER *could go to the trouble of enumerating Brecht's plays and poems which were banned by the "Communist censorship?" No! This it can't do. For the simple reason that there have been no such bans. Nor could there have been any. And anyway, Berthold Brecht was never in "disgrace." He was printed, staged, published, translated; his poems were learned by heart. He was praised, enthused over, revered, and loved. Wilhelm Pieck called Brecht "the best playwright of our day." Walter Ulbricht gave exceptionally high praise to his work and called Brecht a "socialist writer." Brecht was awarded the International Lenin Prize "for the strengthening of Peace between Nations." Could that be called being "in disgrace"?*

ARGUMENT FOUR: *In his posthumous poems Brecht allegedly expressed sympathy with the counter-revolutionary elements who provoked disorders in June, 1953, in Berlin. But here, too, Western critics have got it wrong! They obviously don't know that Brecht's posthumous poems were published in the East German journal "Sinn und Form," which selected ten poems. Nine of them are lyrical in style, and there are no political themes. But the tenth is political and is a direct reaction to the events of June 17th, 1953. There is no need to quote in full this poem which to Mr. Esslin and his friends is like a red rag to a bull. . . .*

The attention shown by the reactionary Western literary experts in Brecht's heritage and the personality of the writer does not seem surprising to us. The corner-stone of the bourgeois school of literature has for centuries been the thesis which alleged that ideology hampered the development of art. The Muses, they say, forsake the artists who have set themselves the aim of fighting for progress and Communism. And in order to prove this, bourgeois critics try to slander Brecht. He is dead. Perhaps they'll manage to convince public opinion that Brecht was not a Communist or, at any rate, wasn't one all the time. They needn't waste their breath. . . .

L. CHERNAYA in *Inostrannaya Literatura*
(Moscow, No. 2, 1960)

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AUTHORS

Max Hayward (who has translated both Abram Tertz' *The Trial Begins* in our January issue and *New Year's Fable* in this current number) *writes*: "This is the first work of **Vladimir Dudintsev** to be published since *Not by Bread Alone*. It can be read in various ways. It has, for instance, been elaborately deciphered as an allegory in which the reformed bandit chief is a chastened Party Leader trying to remedy the evils of the past. It could also be taken more simply as a homily, in a science-fiction setting, on the hallowed theme of *'labor vincit omnia.'* . . . But whatever significance, allegorical or otherwise, may be attached to it, perhaps the most interesting thing about it is the fact of its publication. In 1956 Dudintsev was very severely mauled for, in effect, creating a new type of hero in Soviet literature: namely, the lone rebel who is prepared to fight for the truth as he sees it, not as the authorities will it. In thus raising the individual above the cowardly and conservative 'collective,' Dudintsev was upsetting the Socialist Realist axiom that the way to success and glory lies through service to a higher truth mysteriously invested in the Party and the 'masses.' . . . Four years ago the high priests of the doctrine, pretending to speak in the name of outraged public opinion, were able to hound Dudintsev and others like him into silence. Now Dudintsev has produced this tale whose promethean hero is a worthy successor to Lopatkin of *Not By Bread Alone*. It has been calmly published in the leading literary monthly *Novy Mir* and there has been no outcry from any quarter. The only criticism published so far accepts it as a seasonable moral tale, adding only a mild reproof on account of its 'obscurity.' . . . Its publication serves as a further indication of the great change for the better in the position of Soviet writers since they held their Third Congress in May last year. In his address Khrushchev gave a promise that they would be allowed to run their own affairs with greater freedom, particularly in matters of editorial policy. Judging by the re-admission to print of an unrepentant Dudintsev, the promise is evidently being kept. . . ."

R. H. S. Crossman is completing a book on Israel, a sequel to his *Palestine Mission* of fifteen years ago. The new work will be published by Hamish Hamilton, London and Atheneum, New York. A second article on "Bevin and Ben-Gurion" will be appearing in ENCOUNTER next month.

Morroe Berger has visited Egypt regularly since his American military service in the Middle East during the war years. He has published a book on the Egyptian Civil Service, and is at present Professor of Sociology at Princeton University.

If any reader has a copy of the January 1960 issue which he no longer requires, we should be happy to buy it back for 3s. (or replace it with a copy of any other available issue). Please send copies, which should be in reasonably good condition, to the Business Manager, ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London S.W.1.

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4. **Beyond Nihilism:**
Prof. Michael Polanyi (Chairman), *Sidney Hook, James Joll, Herbert Luethy, Albert Hourani, Hans Kohn, Kathleen Bliss, Pieter Geyl, Manes Sperber, J. G. Weightman, Paul Ignotus.*

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MOZART AND HIS TIMES

Erich Schenk

As the title suggests, this is not only a biography of the composer, but a portrait of the world in which he lived, a world of musicians, librettists, stage designers, theatrical entrepreneurs and dancers, together with the century's princes and prelates who all had to be active musical enthusiasts or risk being considered boors. Within Mozart's short life this group was joined by the rising bourgeoisie whose love of music proved to be different from its cultivation in high society. Mozart's life is presented through his correspondence with his father, with fellow musicians and patrons, and Dr. Schenk is often able to give day-to-day documentary proofs. The author is head of the Music Department of Vienna University and his absorbing, highly readable study should become a standard work for many years to come.

Thirty-two pages of illustrations. May 30th. 50s.

DIALOGUES ON ART

Edouard Roditi

This is a series of conversations between a perceptive and knowledgeable critic and twelve leading European artists; Chagall, Marini, Morandi, Miro, Kokoschka, Hepworth, Tchelitchew, Munter, Paolozzi, Herman, Moore and Fahr-el-Nissa Zeid. The lasting interest of such dialogues depends as much on the interviewer as the artists themselves, and Edouard Roditi proves himself ideally suited to the task. That he is equally at home in many languages is an obvious advantage, but more important are his intimate knowledge of the artistic movements of this century and the fact that he has long moved in artistic circles. But whether the conversation turns to reminiscence—as when Chagall recalls the art world of pre-Revolution Russia, and when Gabriele Munter talks of Kandinsky—or to the artist's own work and his aims and theories, each conversation is full of interesting and revealing material.

Illustrated. 30s.

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